Motor Racing Japanese Grand Prix

Hill takes world title with emphatic win

Richard Williams and Alan Henry

DAMON HILL followed his late father into the record book by winning the Formula One drivers' world championship on Sunday.

The 36-year-old Hill secured the title in the most emphatic manner possible, leading the Japanese grand prix in Suzuka from start to finish. It was his eighth win in the season's 16 races, giving him a 19-point margin over his Williams-Renault team-mate Jacques Villeneuve and putting an end to four years in which his fortunes have fluctuated between triumph and disaster, with not much in between.

In the preceding two seasons he was beaten to the championship by Michael Schumacher, and only a few weeks ago, just as his big lead in this season's championship was starting to dwindle, he suffered a further blow to his confidence when he learned that his team had engaged another driver to replace him next year.

Two weeks ago Hill announced that he would drive in 1997 for the TWR Arrows-Yamaha team, which has yet to win a race but will pay him £5 million for the season.

He went into Sunday's final round knowing he needed only one point for the title while the 25-year-old Villeneuve, in his first season in Formula One, needed the 10 victory points plus Hill's failure to finish in the top six.

Both men started from the front row of the grid but Hill got away cleanly while Villeneuve spun his wheels and had dropped to sixth by the time they reached the first corner. The Canadian had clawed his way back to fourth when, towards the end of the race, his right-hand rear wheel and tyre came off.

Hill pressed on relentlessly after Villeneuve had spun off, determined to depart Williams in style as a winner.

"I never took the view that this championship was going to be a walkover," he said after taking the chequered flag. "Right from the start I knew it was going to be close and I had to take as much of an advantage as I could before Jacques got up to speed and got into the swing of things.

"But it could have gone the other way, Jacques could have been champion and I would have been feeling pretty sick. But I know Jacques is going to get another chance. He is still very young and quick. To be honest, it had to be this year for me and I'm really, really delighted.

"Jacques was a match for me by the end of the season but my motivation was to keep ahead and win the championship. I had the added pressure of having to finish races, whereas he was coming from behind and could take more risks."



Damon Hill is congratulated by his wife Georgie after clinching the world championship title in Japan PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN PRYKE

Hill's candid acknowledgement that it was now or never for him in championship terms reflects an acceptance that the future will be an uphill struggle and that the F1 baton may have passed to a younger generation.

Hill said he would dedicate the race victory — his 21st in 67 starts — to the Williams-Renault team, "but if you don't mind I'll take the championship myself".

His father Graham won the championship in 1962 and 1968, but died in a light plane crash near his home at Elstree, Hertfordshire, in 1975, when Damon was 15. His son becomes the eighth British driver to win the title since its inception in 1950. "This is a terrific feeling for me," he said. "It is a tremendous relief to have finally won it after all the anxieties and the sleepless nights.

"I can hardly wait to get back to my children, but it is especially my wife Georgie I would like to thank for this championship. She has been a tremendous strength to me all the time I have been racing in Formula One."

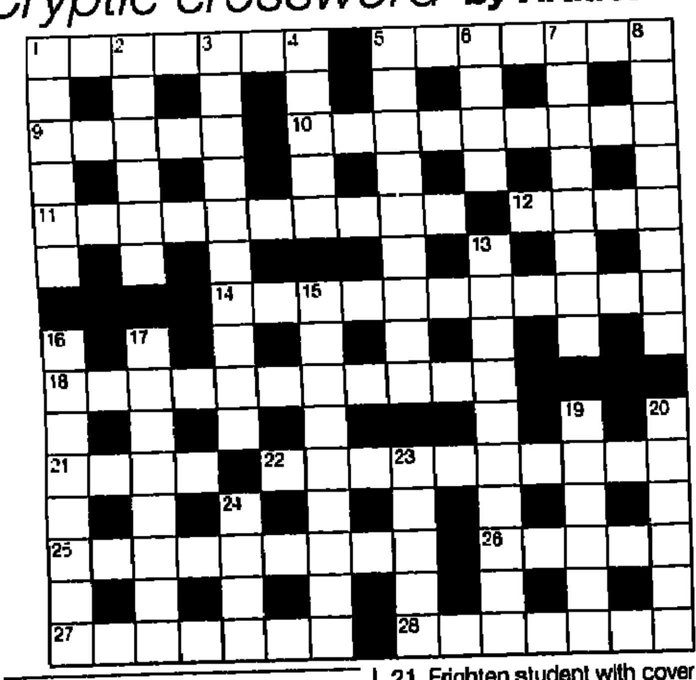
Now Hill moves to the TWR Arrows in an effort to build a new future from F1's second division. The Brazilian Pedro Diniz, who will be his No 2 there next year, had to leave Sunday's race in his Ligier after only 13 laps.

Hill will take to TWR Arrows a renewed self-belief after rediscovering the confidence and edge he had in the season's opening races. Here he produced the goods under maximum pressure, casting aside the increasingly erratic form of the previous four races that had enabled Villeneuve to mount his barnstorming challenge.

● Jackie Stewart signalled his determination to steer his new Formula One team into the big time by announcing that he had signed Jan Magnussen, the 23-year-old Dane who has long been tipped as a future world champion, as his first confirmed driver for 1997.

Stewart, the retired triple world champion who founded Stewart Grand Prix last Christmas with his son Paul, knows better than most what makes a top grand prix driver. He has shrugged aside the disappointment of his failure to recruit Damon Hill and has concluded a four-year contract with Magnussen — and told him to stop smoking.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



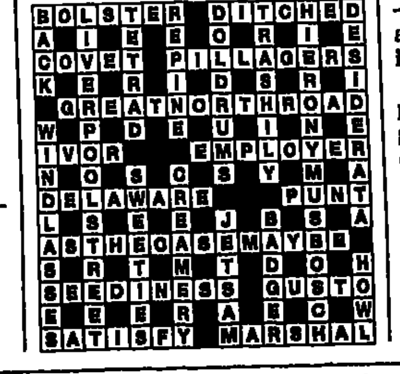
Across

1 Servant holds second person in (7)
5 Two-headed phrase, maybe? Maybe (7)
9 Religious people tried to supplant 14 (5)
10 Troubles go in cycles in 14 (4, 5)
11 King Emperor's Island has right to make music of 14 (6, 4)
12 Utopian requirement of 14 (4)
14 Writes one-volt novel — this is one (6, 5)
18 How restless could be the hero of Nazi song (5, 6)
21 Frighten student with cover for 9 (4)
22 Rule about girl with oranges and one sort of pasta (10)
25 Duke beheaded by another (9)
26 Hard work fashionable in 14 (5)
27 Err leaving 14 characters for bridge in Calderdale (7)
28 Roy's one out? Give a straight answer (3, 2, 2)

Down

1 Bee in 14 (6)
2 Continue to nurse Achilles, for example (6)
3 Gives false news about pier battered with storms (10)
4 Rich man, a Pole, for what he's worth? (5)
5 Spooner's vegetables from the Sun need cold water (5, 4)
6 Got up flower in 14 (4)
7 What 14 did to get 12? (3, 3, 2)
8 Singular effect of three sets for 6 (8)
13 Whisky producer flies off with paintings (5, 5)
15 12 or less, so cite a lynx (9)
16 14's author loses city, French and Deutsch, to birds (8)
17 Coloured base in 14 (8)
19 Evasive artist in 14 (6)
20 White wine from the Arabian coast (6)
23 City of Lorraine in 14 (5)
24 Divorce centre backed by person who wouldn't use it? (4)

Last week's solution



Golf Dunhill Cup

Quiet American victory

David Davies at St Andrews

PHIL MICKELSON's flare-up with Jarmo Sandelin of Sweden betrayed more than a flutter of American nerves on Sunday before the United States went on to win the Dunhill Cup here for only the third time in 12 years.

Fluent semi-final displays by Mark O'Meara and Steve Stricker were steering the United States past Sweden's Hedblom and Sjoland, but Mickelson and Sandelin's match broke that pattern. They were all square at the 12th tee when the American, according to the Swede, said: "You should show me some respect and not behave like that."

Sandelin did not immediately understand what Mickelson was complaining about, but could not deny that whenever he holed a putt — and he had had four birdies at the point in question — he had been punching the air and celebrating in loud and, to impartial ears, obnoxious fashion.

Mickelson, who had been displaying traditional courtesy, congratulating his opponent with the customary "good shot" or "well played", was obviously becoming increasingly irritated.

The final straw came on the 11th green, where Sandelin made his putt, following it towards the hole as if with an imaginary machine-gun. Asked by Sandelin what the problem was, the American replied: "This is a friendly game." To which Sandelin replied: "I know, but I want to win it."

Outside the clubhouse Mickelson later tried to explain why he had spoken out. "I believe competitions like the Ryder Cup, the Dunhill Cup and the President's Cup are wonderful events to promote sportsmanship and camaraderie internationally. I think our match could certainly have been conducted with a little more sportsmanship and I was disappointed it was not."

And so to the final, in which the Americans' slightly unexpected opponents were New Zealand. Frank Nobilo slashed his way past America's O'Meara but the remainder of his crew were cut down as Greg Turner and Grant Waite lost to Mickelson and Stricker respectively.

Nobilo had a very good week. He deserved it, having played in every edition of this event since it started in 1985, the only man to have done so. But Stricker had an even better one, not losing a match and proving far too much for Waite on Sunday.

The top-seeded Americans thus took first prize of £100,000 per man and the New Zealanders, seventh seeds, collected £50,000 each, a good reward for four days of golf.

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Chaos envelops Central Africa

Chris McGreal at the Ruzizi border post, Rwanda

THEODENNE KALENDA waited uncertainly one side of an invisible line that marks the border between Zaire and Rwanda, halfway across a bridge over the Ruzizi river.

His neighbours watched from the hillside behind him. Some were no doubt pleased with their success in driving the village cobbler from his home. But there must have been many who wished they could have gone with him.

Behind Mr Kalenda was Bukavu, a city that has given way to looting and anarchy as Tutsi rebels bear down on it. Over the weekend, there was fresh mortaring by the Banyamulenge, Zairean Tutsis who have rebelled against a campaign of ethnic cleansing with remarkable success.

The United Nations has evacuated all aid workers from the city as the prospect of a battle loomed, abandoning hundreds of thousands of Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said: "A catastrophe greater than the one we knew in 1994 is what worries me most. I appeal to the combatants: please spare the refugees and local populations."

Mr Kalenda and his wife are more recent arrivals than the Banyamulenge, who can trace their roots in eastern Zaire back several centuries. Mr Kalenda, aged 48, fled Rwanda in 1960. But, after 36 years living at peace with his neighbours, he was treated no differently from the Banyamulenge or any other Tutsis in Zaire when the persecution began.

"People came to our house and told us to go away. They called me a rebel. We were threatened by soldiers who looted everything from our house, and said: 'You'd better leave or we'll kill you.'"

Mr Kalenda's house looked down on the bridge across the border, but he feared he might not make even that short distance.

"Some neighbours were kind to me and accompanied me to the border," Mr Kalenda said. "We were frightened of the military so we paid them $40 not to menace us."

As Mr Kalenda fled, Bukavu radio was broadcasting a declaration by the provincial governor, Kyembwa wa Lumuna: "Do not join the panic created by the Rwandan Tutsis under the pretext of recovering the land of their ancestors. The murderers want to kill us. We are asking you to be vigilant, to find these people who have infiltrated among the refugees," it said every 15 minutes.

It sounded remarkably similar to the extremist Hutu messages broadcast during the Rwandan genocide.

In Bukavu, many Tutsis have disappeared. Militiamen armed with nail-studded clubs patrol the streets. It is not clear if they are Zairean, or drawn from Hutu extremists among the Rwandan refugees.

Tutsis have met a similar fate in Goma to the north, where rebels are moving towards refugee camps. The largest, Kibumba, emptied after fighting nearby.

"It's tragic, appalling. We have a human river 25km long from the camp south to Goma," said Panos Moumtzis, spokesman for the UN refugee agency. On Sunday several thousand Hutu refugees even returned to Rwanda — a sign of desperation as they have resisted returning for two years fearing retribution for the genocide of Tutsis.

A Zairean family flees the fighting between ethnic Tutsis and Zairean troops PHOTOGRAPH: CORINNE DUFKA

Zaire continues to accuse Rwanda of organising and arming the Banyamulenge, or even invading, but the Rwandan president, Pasteur Bizimungu, denied on Monday that his country was providing military help to the Banyamulenge, though he said he morally supported their struggle against "extermination" by Zairean authorities.

Observers strongly suspect the Rwandan military of assisting the Zairean Tutsi militias.

The spreading conflict threatens the whole of Central Africa's Great Lakes region and the unity of Zaire. Zaire, the UN and Western governments, which appear powerless to intervene, are reaping the whirlwind of their callous indifference.

In 1994, Zaire's now ailing president, Mobutu Sese Seko, gave a home to more than a million Rwandan Hutu refugees as a lever to destabilise the new Tutsi-dominated government in Rwanda. Sheltering the refugees won him favour among former friends, such as France and the United States, which quietly dropped pressure for Mobutu to surrender power.

Through the UN, the West fed and watered the hordes in the camps, and the world assuaged its guilt at ignoring the Hutu-inspired slaughter by pouring in massive aid. But this helped to ensure the survival of the Interahamwe militias, which had led the killing of Tutsis. The UN turned a blind eye not only to the past crimes of these mass killers, but their efforts to perpetuate the slaughter.

Mobutu now lies sick in a Swiss hospital, and doubts whether he will survive his prostate cancer are increasing the chaos in his rudderless nation. Meanwhile the UN is pleading for an end to the suffering of Hutu refugees, after standing by as those same refugees slaughtered thousands of Zairean Tutsis and set the present crisis in motion.

Muller Ruhimbika, a Banyamulenge, is scathing. "For two years we've been telling people — diplomats and foreigners — it was going to explode. They were laughing in

Continued on page 3

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

EU unites in defiance of US Cuba law

Stephen Bates and John Palmer in Luxembourg

EUROPEAN Union companies are to be prohibited from complying with United States legislation aimed at penalising firms trading with Cuba, Libya or Iran, under an agreement reached this week by EU foreign ministers.

The regulations, hailed by EU trade commissioner Sir Leon Brittan as "an historic breakthrough", will also allow European companies to reclaim damages in EU courts if they are penalised in the US under the Helms-Burton law.

The US law, signed by President Clinton but delayed until January, allows lawsuits to be filed in the US against foreign firms that own or operate properties seized by Cuba from US citizens who were Cuban nationals before the 1959 communist revolution.

The Danish government had threatened last week to pull out of the joint approach because of fears that the regulations would infringe Danish constitutional sovereignty. But after intense negotiations in Luxembourg, lawyers found a way to proceed with united legislation from all 15 EU states.

Under the regulations agreed on Monday, any European company will be instructed to ignore the Helms-Burton legislation if its interests are threatened and, if it is successfully sued in an American court, it will be able to claim back any financial penalties through a counter-claim in a European court.

The counter-sanctions are intended to concentrate minds in the US government once the presidential election is over next week, and to head off the threat of court battles on both sides of the Atlantic.

Sir Leon said: "The Helms-Burton legislation is anathema to the rest of the world."

In response, the US state department's spokesman, Nicholas Burns, criticised the Europeans for not joining with Washington in pressing harder for democracy and improved human rights in Cuba.

"We wish the Europeans also had expressed public interest and made a priority of the situation of the many many people in Cuba whose rights are being denied by the Castro government. We'd like to see more talk from the Europeans about democracy in Cuba," he said.

The British government, which frequently finds itself in a minority on sensitive issues touching on the power balance between national states and the European Union, is leading the fight for a tough EU stand against Washington.

The EU agreement will not affect a case brought by the European Commission against the United States at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva.

A WTO panel is due to convene on November 20 to rule on EU complaints that the Helms-Burton act is extra-territorial. The EU is still studying proposals to bar American executives involved in litigation from entering the 15-nation bloc and has already begun compiling a "watchlist" of potential litigants.

● The EU foreign ministers are ready to consider full economic and trade sanctions against Burma if the military dictatorship steps up repression of the democratic opposition. They imposed limits on contacts with Burmese officials in response to Rangoon's continuing failure to respect human rights.

The sanctions will deny EU visas to members of the State Law and Order Restoration Council. Visits to Burma by senior officials from the EU and its members are to be suspended. The EU has already imposed an arms embargo.

Austria	AS30	Malta	60c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

The gene genie takes a place at the table

I READ with some interest Michael Durham's feature "Scrambled gene cuisine for dinner" (October 20), the central point of which appears to be that consumers should have the choice to decide if they will purchase genetically engineered food or not. While I do not think anyone can argue with this fundamental tenet of consumerism, I think it is important that this consumer choice be put into its broadest and not most alarmist context.

Conventional plant breeding has for years relied upon the selection of traits conferring desirable characteristics, such as increased yield, via artificial selection in the laboratory and field. Protection of these plants has subsequently relied upon the spraying of compounds mainly discovered by random screening for insecticidal, herbicidal or fungicidal activity.

Genetic engineering represents the ability to isolate DNA coding for particular traits such as herbicide resistance or protection from insect attack (be they from strains of the same plant or other organisms) and to engineer these directly into commercially used varieties. This is not "scary genetic tinkering . . . by white-coated scientists" but a logical extension of our increased understanding of the genetic processes that underlie beneficial traits in plants and also the weaknesses of the pests that attack them.

Of course the consumer in the developed world must ultimately decide if he or she wants genetically engineered firmer tomatoes, or to eat crops made resistant to insects via the introduction of insecticidal bacterial proteins. However, the choice may be between the latter and consuming conventional pesticide residues while these residues continue to accumulate in the food chain.

More importantly, given that the growing of large amounts of crops in monocultures by man is "unnatural", we are immediately faced with a series of difficult and progressively multiplying crop protection problems, such as herbicide, fungicide and insecticide resistance. In view of the real advantages generated by the "green revolution" in feeding the developing world, these consumer choices may therefore soon only be the luxury of the well-provided consumer in developed countries.

In short, the choice to feed the growing world population (ie, of continuously improving agricultural yields to keep pace with population growth) has already been made, and we are really only "choosing" between options (genetic engineering versus continued plant breeding and random pesticide screening).

Given this commitment to growing more food to feed more people, once genetically engineered strains (like the conventionally derived strains before them) begin to have an impact on food production in developing countries, such choices may become the luxury of the well-provided few.
Richard ffrench-Constant and Kirstie Forbes-Robertson,
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

WHO among your readers does not know that agribusiness wants genetically engineered plants to enter the human food chain? And who has not heard that some groups oppose it? Yet even after reading Michael Durham's article, who can say more? For example, who knows the difference between a genetically engineered plant and one obtained by the kind of selective breeding not done since the days of the pharaohs.

Ignorance of the detailed arguments on — not from — either side is widespread. The important issue is not to relay the one-line propaganda of the "progressive" or "Luddite" camps, but to impart new information to create a wiser public. Crucial to making a sensible decision is how to assess when unknown factors may be important. There are no clear answers: the key is the concept of probability and its application to risk assessment.

Think of human gene therapy and pre- and post-natal genetic testing. The meeting of genes and environment will permeate our lives as it becomes possible to predict the likely fate of individuals and how they might avoid it. To choose, we must understand. Let there be no mistake: the ethical decisions we make, or fail to make, before the millennium will determine whether past advances in molecular biology turn out for good or ill in the next century.
Simon M Hughes,
London

Playing a role in world politics

YOUR EDITORIAL on UN reform (October 27) was timely. Britain's role, as a permanent member of the Security Council, is crucial — although, with its current European Union neurosis, it seems to have forgotten this.

A top priority, starting with the "permanent five", is to draw up a job description and a list of agreed criteria by which the selection of the secretary-general will be made. It is disgraceful that this has not happened and that all we have had is the US brandishing its veto of Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

High among the criteria must be the ability to mobilise public opinion by articulating the challenges that make the UN indispensable, the confidence and skills to develop a proactive instead of a reactive agenda of action, and the experience and firmness to sort out a demoralised and too frequently introspective bureaucracy.

But nothing is more important in the light of recent history than to regenerate the UN's contribution to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building. Peacekeeping is not enough. To settle for that alone would be to reflect a counsel of despair.
Paul Eavis,
Executive Director
Lord Judd,
Saferworld, London

IN "Clinton 'to intensify US role in Africa' " (October 20) I was very amused by the statement by the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher: "I will not pretend to you that there is no debate in America about Africa's relative importance . . ."

I see this as an effort to curry favour and an excuse to take advantage of South Africa in matters such as setting up a US military base there. What relative importance has Africa ever had for the US besides being a stage for military actions and exercises? However, I suppose the US deserves full marks for this "new effort".
Dominic G McDonald,
Sydney, Australia

Money talks too loud

PETER THURNHAM has joined the Liberal Democrats over the issue of Tory sleaze/cash for questions, the Prime Minister is charging thousands of pounds for people to have an exclusive dinner with him, and James Goldsmith is spending similar amounts of money as the Conservative and Labour parties are on funding his Referendum party. Isn't it time to address the question of state-funding of political parties?

It has long been known that money can help buy power and influence, but it now seems that only money can bring issues to the fore. Is it right that Goldsmith has had to spend £20 million to raise one issue? Or has access to politicians been totally cut off from people less affluent than him?

State funding would provide the people's representatives with the people's money and give everyone equal access to exert political influence. Goldsmith has been able to bring even more publicity to an issue already established in the minds of many people, whereas the Green Party — thinking of the planet's rather than just Europe's future — and the national parties of Wales, Scotland and Ulster have nowhere near the same resources to promote the issue most important to them.

An alternative would be to expose the source of all party funds and limit the amount parties spend according to the number of seats each is contesting.
Chris Wray,
Sydney, Australia

DOWNING Street has refused to set up an inquiry into cash-for-questions under a senior judge because this would mean changing the Bill of Rights. Well, it managed to amend legislation rapidly enough to enable Neil Hamilton to take action against the Guardian in the first place. How about a bit more nifty footwork to make the inquiry legally possible?
Brian P Moss,
Tamworth, Staffordshire

Stand by women in Afghanistan

SHAME on the international organisations that have decided to "respect the local cultures of Afghanistan", thereby justifying their continued aid to the repressive Taliban (Aid agencies bite the bullet, October 13).

I doubt the "thousands of women doctors, teachers and other professionals" in Kabul now being forced to stay home consider this completely new restriction of their rights a "local culture" issue. As for the ludicrous justification given by Thomas Gurtner of the Red Cross for its actions: since when has human rights not been included under human assistance?

If the tables were turned and these rules were being applied to men and their sons by a group of so-called religious women leaders, the international community would be in an uproar. If the Taliban are as desperate for aid as you report, then what better weapon to force them to reconsider their rules? But then what can you expect from these aid groups that are, after all, dominated by men?
Mary Huber,
Kanazawa, Japan

Briefly

VICTOR KEEGAN'S comment regarding the Internet (October 13) raised several good points. However, it was wrong regarding Latin America. Keegan says that people in the Third World cannot afford access to the Internet. That is not true in Mexico, where the rate of new subscribers is increasing by as much as whopping 40 per cent a month, despite the nation's worst economic crisis in six decades. In Buenos Aires, the number of users has meant the super highway has become a super traffic jam during the day.
Michael J Zamba,
Mexico City, Mexico

I ENJOYED Richard Jones's direction of Das Rheingold at Covent Garden (October 6). However, someone ought to have checked his quotation: Wagner wrote, not to Rilke, but to August Roeckel (his comrade in arms in the Dresden Revolution of 1849) that "lovelessness is the fear of death". This was in 1850, some 25 years before Rilke was born.
(Prof) Roy Pateman,
UCLA, Los Angeles, USA

RELIGION, like politics, is the last refuge of the scoundrel. I shall be impressed by John Major's virtue only when, ignoring his party's desire to cling to office, he punishes those in his party who deal in deceit. As for New Labour, how would they behave if faced with the temptations of power?
(Dr) Dorothy Rowe,
London

I WRITE to give support to what might seem like the lone voices of Martin Woollacott and Edward Said on the plight of the dispossessed Palestinians (October 6).

Jews and Palestinians have shared that land from times immemorial. Now, after witnessing and even tacitly supporting 50 years of land-grabbing and violence, we seem to have nothing to propose than a "Bantustan" with all its obvious consequences and connotations.
Seghir Messamah,
Llandudno, North Wales

IT WAS reassuring to read the John Hooper piece from Rome (October 20) and to learn that things have not changed. My husband was a journalist in Rome many years ago and I was puzzled as to why our concierge always addressed him as "Professore". His reply to my query was that she knew he could read and write. Then one day we received a letter addressing him as "Comte". The next time we passed her, beaming she curtseyed, and upgraded him a notch with "*Buon giorno, Duca*".
Barbara de Lapeyrière,
Bristol

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The Week

RICHARD JEWELL, the security guard subjected to round-the-clock surveillance on suspicion of bombing the Atlanta Olympics in July, is planning to sue federal investigators after the United States justice department cleared him of involvement in the attack.
Washington Post, page 15

DUTCH police found cocaine worth $150 million after a container from Venezuela docked at Rotterdam, and in raids at several houses around the Netherlands which followed the discovery. Eight people have been arrested.

THOUSANDS of engineering workers across Germany downed tools in lightning strikes and staged protest marches at the collapse of pay talks and plans to cut sickness benefits.

REBEL Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers said that two of their officials had been shot dead in Paris and blamed the killings on the Colombo government.

THE United Nations appealed for international help for Cuba after Hurricane Lili was reported to have damaged hospitals and clinics, and contaminated the country's water supply.

ALFRED SANT was sworn in as Malta's first Labour prime minister for nine years after electors voted him in, opting to scrap their country's application for membership of the European Union.

ZAMBIA'S former president and now the main opposition leader, Kenneth Kaunda, said his party would boycott the elections that President Frederick Chiluba has called on November 18.

THE 1996 Nobel peace prize winner, the Roman Catholic bishop of East Timor, Carlos Belo, declined an invitation to meet Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Jakarta, saying he had "too busy an agenda".

THE QUEEN and the Duke of Edinburgh made a four-day state visit to King Bhumipol of Thailand. She warned of "the threat of drugs, terrorism and organised crime", and urged closer co-operation.

BOSNIA'S rehabilitation suffered another setback when the international organisation in charge of its election postponed the local polls scheduled for this month because of the lack of co-operation between the parties involved.

NORWAY'S hugely popular prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, announced she was stepping down after dominating her country's politics for the past 15 years.
Le Monde, page 13

Doctors cancel Yeltsin's meetings

David Hearst in Moscow

DOCTORS treating President Boris Yeltsin on Monday abruptly cancelled his scheduled meetings for this week, up to a month before he is due to undergo surgery for a heart bypass.

The Kremlin said this would enable him to have a "special regime" of pre-operative tests. But it did not say what the tests were, or set a date for the operation.

Sergei Yastrzhembsky, the president's spokesman, said the doctors had ordered complete rest while Mr Yeltsin undergoes the tests and that his meetings with Viktor Chernomyrdin, the prime minister, would be cancelled.

Successive visitors to Mr Yeltsin's bedside in his sanatorium outside Moscow have commented on his mental agility. These statements helped to persuade a sceptical and feuding political élite that he was still controlling the levers of power.

The fact that the meetings have been cancelled could mean either that the tests are more serious than have been admitted, or he is about to have his operation, much sooner than expected.

Michael DeBakey, the eminent American cardiologist, was quoted by an Italian newspaper this week as saying no complications had been found and the operation would go ahead in the last two weeks of November.

Meanwhile the bitter power struggle between Mr Yeltsin's clique of advisers and his ousted security chief General Alexander Lebed took a turn for the worse last week as the interior ministry handed prosecutors documents which it said proved that the general was preparing to seize power.

Gen Lebed has ridiculed these claims, but as a man who has lost his place in the president's administration and no longer holds a parliamentary seat, he has no immunity from prosecution.

The claims centre on allegations by the interior minister, General Anatoly Kulikov, a long-standing rival, that Gen Lebed was mustering an army of 50,000, supported by 1,500 Chechen rebels. Gen Kulikov said Gen Lebed intended to seize power in a "rolling coup".

The documents handed to prosecutors were those placed before an emergency meeting of security chiefs, headed by Mr Chernomyrdin, last week. While confirming that there was truth in the allegation that Gen Lebed was forming a new unit — a fact which Gen Lebed himself does not deny — the prime minister said he doubted whether it was to overthrow the state.

In another manifestation of the murky battle for power, Mr Yeltsin stripped his former bodyguard and confidant, Alexander Korzhakov, of his military rank of general in apparent revenge for revealing that the president was advised by doctors not to stand for re-election. Mr Korzhakov also claimed that Anatoly Chubais, the president's chief of staff, has usurped power. He said Mr Yeltsin had fallen under the influence of Mr Chubais and the president's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko.

Mr Chernomyrdin told leaders of the Federal Security Service that certain people were striving "to use the process of democratic reforms in the country to create extremist, militarised, terrorist and other formations". They posed a direct threat to state security.

The prime minister did not mention Gen Lebed by name. All attempts to stop the mutual mud-slinging have failed, and if the prosecutor-general, the government's main law officer, formally investigates Gen Lebed, more incriminating counter-accusations against Mr Chubais are certain to follow.

This might force the ruling élite to gather around the prime minister and form a coalition with the Communists, who control the Duma. The aim would be to oust Mr Chubais.

Mr Korzhakov, who has backed Gen Lebed's attempt to become the next president, has said he supports the full transfer of presidential powers to the prime minister, who is constitutionally the president's stand-in, to be followed by elections in three months.

Afghan village torched by Taliban militia

Jonathan Steele in Sarchesma

SOME villages are flattened by bombs. Others are shelled and rocketed to destruction. Neither fate is as shocking as death by fire. The killers move among the terrified people, torching and burning in full view of their victims.

"Everything is gone," screamed Nazwar, a middle-aged woman, as her teenage daughter stood blankly behind her. "My grain is burning. My house is burning. My life is burning."

The smell of charred wood hung in the air. Several doors in the tall mud-brick walls along the winding village street showed signs of having been kicked in. Blackened roof-beams lay in dust and rubble.

The fighting north of Kabul since the Taliban seized the Afghan capital last month has killed and wounded scores of civilians. Bombs dropped from a Taliban plane left 20 people, mostly children, dead in the town of Kalakan last week. But no atrocity has been as cold-blooded as the collective punishment that the ultra-fundamentalist Taliban militias inflicted on the hamlet of Sarchesma.

Only four of its 120 homes are unscathed. Half a dozen lorries piled high with the remains of people's livelihood lurched along the dirt road in the opposite direction as we drove in. Women and children perched on top, men hung from the sides.

It was only on Thursday last week, in a brief lull in the fighting, that outsiders could reach the village. Our car quickly attracted a crowd of wailing and hysterical people. All begged us to see what was left of their homes.

The most desperate was Khairuddin, a man of 55. He lost his daughter and all three grandsons when a Taliban soldier fired a rocket from a hill above the village shortly before the troops moved in. Khairuddin brought the veil his daughter was wearing when she died. He held up the blood-stained garment and a pair of plastic shoes. "I buried them all yesterday," he said, half shouting, half weeping.



Villagers flee as forces of the former government, in alliance with the Uzbek militia, fight back against the Taliban PHOTO: SANTIAGO LYON

In the atmosphere of grief, shock, despair and anger it was hard at first to piece together what had happened. As people slowly calmed down, the story began to emerge.

The Taliban entered the village last weekend, summoned everyone to the central square, and ordered them to hand in their weapons. When the guns were handed over, the Taliban warned the villagers to report any sign of Ahmed Shah Massoud's forces trying to infiltrate Sarchesma. The villagers are Tajiks, and it was highly likely that Commander Massoud, the main Tajik leader and defence minister in the ousted government, would try to move in.

The Taliban returned to their base on a hill outside Sarchesma. Next morning the villagers awoke to find Massoud forces had sneaked in during the night. They fired on the Taliban from the shelter of the village. After a day of intermittent exchanges the Massoud forces withdrew.

Retribution soon followed. Between 20 and 30 Taliban entered the village the next morning. Systematically they poured petrol on the houses and set them ablaze.

Nizamuddin, a farmer, showed the pile of scarred and blackened grain in his storehouse. Recently harvested, it represented a large part of his income for the year.

A younger neighbour, Najmuddin, produced a metal bowl containing a pile of ash. "This is the Koran," he exclaimed, his voice rising with outrage. One could just make out the edges of charred pages.

Chaos in east Zaire

Continued from page 1

our faces when we asked for help. Now they want to mediate. Mediate what?"

The roots of the Banyamulenge rebellion lie not just in the fate of Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide, but also the mass slaughter of other Tutsis in Zaire over the past two years. Several hundred miles to the north of the Uvira area, the Banyarwanda were an early target for pogroms. Two years of attacks by Hutu militias drove 150,000 Banyarwanda from their homes; 15,000 people were killed.

Rwanda warned of another genocide in the making and appealed for international intervention, but the UN in the refugee camps looked the other way, on the grounds that the Banyarwanda were Zairean citizens — even though one reason they were being murdered was because Zaire said it had stripped them of their citizenship. Only now is the UN facing up to what occurred.

In a report on the killings in Masisi, issued last month, it accused the Interahamwe of conniving with Zairean troops to murder and expel Tutsis and blames the Zairean government, especially the "political class which has fomented xenophobic nationalist sentiment". Even some Zairean human rights groups are said to have "fostered racial hatred and ethnic cleansing rather than defending the oppressed".

For the Banyamulenge, the crunch came when South Kivu's deputy governor, Lwasi Ngabo Lwabanji, gave them a week to get out of Zaire. Only too aware of the fate of the Banyarwanda in Masisi, they struck back last month.

There is a clear attempt to empty the refugee camps, which suits both Rwanda and Burundi. Some believe Rwanda may be attempting to carve out a buffer zone. But there's also no doubt that for many of the fighters the battle is about something closer to home — their own land.

● A BBC journalist, Martin Dawes, was beaten and robbed at gunpoint by soldiers from the Zairean army in Bukavu at the weekend.



Israeli war games belie peace talk

Shyam Bhatia in Jerusalem

MAJOR-GENERAL Uzi Dayan watched as Israeli troops participated in a mock battle last week to recapture the Palestinian city of Nablus. Gen Dayan, a nephew of Israel's war hero, the late Moshe Dayan, is military commander of the West Bank.

Tanks and helicopters used live ammunition as paratroopers stormed a cardboard replica of the Nablus kasbah and hung the Star of David from its ramparts. Israeli soldiers disguised as Palestinian policemen fought back unsuccessfully as the army, spearheaded by élite commando units, tightened its grip on the city.

Gen Dayan, using the tactics deployed by his illustrious uncle in the 1967 Middle East war, needed only a few hours to complete a mission that took Moshe Dayan six days to accomplish. The war fever that grips Israel's military top brass today has a chilling similarity to the mood that prevailed at the outbreak of the 1967 hostilities.

In private some army generals, including Gen Dayan, admit to a sense of personal humiliation following the bloody confrontations with the Palestinians in September. The Israelis lost 15 soldiers in the clashes with Yasser Arafat's police force.

Last week's secret military exercises to recapture Nablus and other Palestinian cities were authorised by the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, who is under pressure from his rightwing supporters to teach the Palestinians a lesson by reneging on the Oslo peace accords.

It is an open secret that Mr Netanyahu shares his constituency's distaste for Oslo, which he believes will lead to the partition of the "land of Israel" and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. He sees himself as a prisoner of unacceptable agreements and understandings negotiated by his Labour predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin.

"Its not an easy situation," says a source in the prime minister's office. "Anything that's good for the Palestinians is bad for Israel and anything that's good for Israel is bad for the Palestinians. It's not clear to us how we can escape from this trap."

Many of Mr Netanyahu's supporters say war is the only solution. Some pray that the Palestinians will initiate hostilities and provide the Israeli army with an excuse to retaliate and drive the final nail into the Oslo coffin. They are critical of the prime minister for not seizing the strategic opportunity that was presented to him during last month's mini-intifada.

"Netanyahu voters expected him to end or at least suspend the policy of pullbacks," said Yisrael Harel, one of the leaders of 150,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "But instead he rushed off to meet Arafat in Washington."

Disappointment with Mr Netanyahu is shared across the spectrum of Israel's right wing. Like Rabin, he is being branded a traitor for agreeing to give the Palestinians control over more parts of the West Bank. If and when Mr Netanyahu hands over the West Bank city of Hebron to Mr Arafat, he will reap the whirlwind of the right's pent-up anger.

The prime minister has already committed himself to the principle of Israel's military withdrawal from the city, where 400 Jewish ideologues live among more than 100,000 Arabs. As the countdown for the withdrawal gets under way, Israelis are once again talking about the "writing on the wall". Jewish fanatics have threatened violence to prevent Mr Arafat's "uniformed thugs" from entering the city.

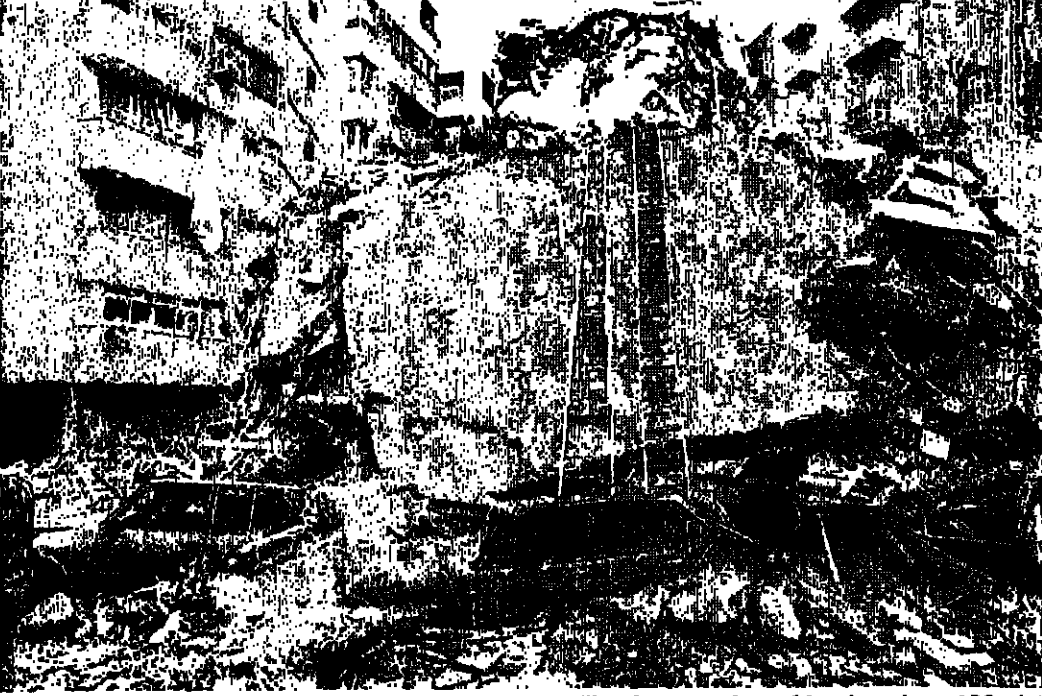
On Tuesday thousands of Netanyahu supporters were due to meet in central Jerusalem to hold a rally against his intention to compromise on Hebron. One organiser, Nadia Mattar, said: "Hebron is a test. If they pull out, we will all protest and demonstrate."

To add to his problems, Mr Netanyahu has been told the army needs 3.5 billion shekels ($2.5 billion) because of an increased chance of war with Syria. On Monday the defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, told a parliamentary committee Israeli forces planned a big Syrian military exercise and were "taking the necessary steps for maximum alertness".

● The Israeli-PLO peace talks went into suspended animation on Monday as the Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, left for talks in Norway and Ireland, and the United States mediator Dennis Ross returned to Washington.

Meanwhile clashes broke out on Tuesday in the small West Bank town of Hussan following the funeral of a Palestinian boy alleged to have been beaten to death by a Jewish settler. The disturbances lasted for about an hour with some Palestinians receiving minor injuries.

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An apartment building collapsed in Cairo on Sunday, killing four people and leaving about 100 missing and feared dead. The 11-storey building, located just two blocks from the home of the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, caved in on its residents in the suburb of Heliopolis. By Monday evening, rescue workers had pulled more than 20 survivors from the rubble PHOTOGRAPH: MONA SHAF[illegible]

Austrian leader defies pressure to quit

Ian Traynor in Vienna

REELING from his worst election results in 10 years in power, Austria's centrist chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, is fighting for his political survival.

Frustration in his social democratic party (SPO) is putting pressure on Mr Vranitzky to resign. But he has announced he will stand again for the party leadership next year.

He may not last that long. "Dead Man Walking" is what the Vienna news magazine Profil called him this week.

Last month the extreme-right Freedom Party of Jörg Haider triumphed in elections to the European Parliament and the provincial assembly of Vienna. On the political fringe five years ago, Mr Haider won 2 per cent less than the social democrats in the Euro-poll and wiped out their majority in Vienna.

As if to magnify his discomfort, Mr Vranitzky told Profil: "The situation is very complicated. We can only interpret the answer given by the voters on October 13 as the answer to the question posed on October 13 and not as the answer to the question not put on October 13. This is not denial of reality."

Such elliptical conundrums contrast with the cheeky soundbites of Mr Haider, who is already speculating openly about a coalition government with the SPO after Mr Vranitzky goes.

The two men's political careers have shadowed one another. They have shown a mutual loathing. In 1986, the year Mr Haider took over the Freedom Party, Mr Vranitzky became chancellor. He instantly dissolved the coalition with the Freedom Party to dissociate himself from Mr Haider. The standoff has continued ever since.

Given a system of proportional representation which makes coalition government the rule, Mr Vranitzky's aversion to the far right is now tantamount to disenfranchising almost a third of the electorate.

The social democrats, long used to monopoly rule in Vienna, are cobbling together a coalition with the Christian Democratic People's Party. It is already being described as "the losers' coalition".

Although the European elections put the social democrats ahead of Mr Haider and the ballot does not necessarily reflect what would happen at a general election, Mr Haider is clearly still soaring while the chancellor slumps.

Comment, page 12

Protests grow against Bhutto's government

Suzanne Goldenberg in Islamabad

THREE leaders of the religious opposition party Jamaat-i-Islami were picked up in a police sweep on Monday as the Pakistani authorities tried to stop protests against Benazir Bhutto's government.

Nearly 4,000 followers of the Islamist party prayed in front of parliament in a dramatic show of power, and, for the second day running, riot police fought with them in the capital and the adjoining city of Rawalpindi. Their leader, Hussein Ahmed, was detained for several hours before being released.

The extraordinary prayer meeting lasted about half an hour before police doused the protesters with hundreds of rounds of tear gas.

Mass rallies are banned in Islamabad, and the events showed the ability of Jamaat, which has just three seats in parliament, to get its supporters, mainly students, on to the streets. They also paralysed much of Islamabad as police chased demonstrators down city streets.

The show of strength could also serve to mobilise the main opposition parties against Ms Bhutto, who is coming under increasingly fierce attack for alleged corruption and financial mismanagement.

The government meanwhile announced that Ms Bhutto had given up the finance portfolio. Her privatisation minister, Syed Naveed Qamar, is to be given the post.

The International Monetary Fund is delaying disbursement of a £400 million standby loan because of Pakistan's repeated failures to meet agreed targets.

● A team of former Scotland Yard detectives and forensic experts has been called in by Ms Bhutto to investigate the killing in September of her brother Murtaza. The team has been hired by the Sindh provincial government under a six-figure contract.

EU presses Bogotá on BP

David Harrison and Melissa Jones

THE Colombian government faces growing pressure to launch a judicial inquiry into allegations that BP is causing grave environmental damage and collaborating with the Colombian military, which has committed serious abuses of human rights.

The furore follows the disclosure last week of an unpublished Colombian government report accusing BP of collaboration with soldiers involved in beatings, torture and murder in the north-eastern Casanare region.

The European Parliament urged Colombia's President Ernesto Samper to publish the report and voted overwhelmingly to call on BP and other oil companies to "observe the highest respect for human rights and environmental protection".

Richard Howitt, a British Labour MEP — who tabled the resolution — accused BP of trying to cover up its activities, saying: "It's time for BP to come clean." — *The Observer*

Palestinians fête Chirac

FRANCE'S president, Jacques Chirac, was given a hero's welcome by the Palestinians last week when he became the first foreign leader to address their parliament, following the tribulations and indignities of his two days in Israel, *writes Derek Brown in Jerusalem.*

In contrast with the ill-tempered brawl with Israeli security men in Jerusalem's Old City, Mr Chirac was greeted by cheering crowds in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

The French leader has become an instant hero to the Palestinians because of his stirring advice of the previous day to his tormentors: "This is a provocation. Stop this now."

He praised Yasser Arafat, talked of the building of a Palestinian state, condemned Jewish colonisation of the West Bank, and implicitly backed the Palestinians' claims to at least a share of Jerusalem.

Earlier, as he took his leave of Israel's president, Ezer Weizman, Mr Chirac had promised to convey the message to the Palestinians that there should be no more violence. He kept his word.

In addressing the Palestinian Council Mr Chirac pointedly spoke of "the freedom and human rights you were for so long denied".

Le Monde, page 13

From communist gold to 'illustrious corpse'

A former PM died in a deadly struggle between mafia gangs, writes **Julian Borger** in Sofia

ANDREI LUKANOV saw himself as a man for the nineties. When the old regime collapsed at the start of the decade, he transformed Communist Party rank into post-communist gold by arranging for state enterprises to fall into the laps of his comrades in the *nomenklatura*. It was a feat of alchemy that made him one of the most influential men in the country. He was a wily grey fox — and he believed he was untouchable.

On October 2 he was proved wrong. Lukanov was on his way to work when he realised that he had forgotten some documents at home. He walked back to his front door and called his wife on the intercom. They were the last words he ever spoke.

An assassin shot him four times, and then disappeared into the Sofia suburbs. Neighbours later said they had seen the murderer in the days before the killing, hanging around in the street disguised as a beggar. The murder remains unsolved.

The shock resounds through the city's pot-holed streets. This was the man who had engineered Bulgaria's bloodless transition from communism, persuading the old dictator, Todor Zhivkov, to step down without a fight.

Lukanov, who died aged 58, had rubbed shoulders with Mikhail Gorbachev, the last president of the Soviet Union. He had been close friends with Robert Maxwell at a time when Bulgarians thought the British magnate would help transform their country. Now he has become eastern Europe's most "illustrious corpse".

People travelled across the country and queued for hours to see his body lie in state in the old Communist Party headquarters. Tearful old men gave clenched-fist salutes over the open coffin.

Lukanov would have smiled at the irony of it all. He helped to destroy the secure, stagnant world his mourners were so nostalgic for, replacing it with the economic nightmare in which they now live.

The system Lukanov engineered was neither communism nor capitalism but a mutant hybrid combining the worst of both. It allowed the nomenklatura to acquire wealth unshackled by the ideological and legal limits of the old regime and unchecked by normal competition.

It was brutally simple. Until Lukanov's spell as prime minister ended in November 1990, his friends and associates took up key positions in state banks and industries and — under the guise of reform — diverted resources into dozens of new trading companies, banks and brokerage houses, which dominated the commodity and currency markets, transferring much of their profits to foreign bank accounts. Privatisation, which might have created genuine competition, was continually delayed.

The sudden concentration of wealth gave Sofia a certain candied gloss. The city streets are now lined with brightly lit shops offering luxury products. But they reflect not the creation of wealth but money on its way out of the country. This summer the banks — looted by their own managers — began to collapse. Nine are currently facing liquidation.

The system that Lukanov engineered drained the life-blood from the economy and, in one way or another, it consumed its own creator.

It was inevitable that Lukanov's power would come under challenge. The pro-reform Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) tried to break up the cartels during a year-long spell in office in 1992, but it was an uneven struggle. Communist apparatchiks still controlled the machinery of government.

The real threat to Lukanov came from within his Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). Elections in December 1994 brought to office a new generation of former communists around Zhan Videnov, aged 37, the outgoing prime minister, who had built a power base in the party's youth movement, Komsomol.

Soon after, journalists at the Kapital financial newspaper noticed a cluster of new trading companies suddenly making their presence felt on the Bulgarian market. Editor Philip Harmandjiev said: "Quite by accident an astrologer who was in the office overheard us talking, and he told us all these companies were named after stars in the Orion constellation, such as Mintaka, Hatisa and Betelgeuse. So we started looking up companies named after other Orion stars and found they were all connected." The "Orion Group" was closely linked to the prime minister: managers of its member companies were among his closest colleagues.

Orion's backing gave Mr Videnov increasing room for manoeuvre within the BSP, and independence from Lukanov. He built his own system of patronage and control, and when Orion bought Duma, the party paper, it was a stunning blow to Lukanov and his entourage.

In a final coup in July, Mr Videnov removed Lukanov from his prized position of chairman of Topenergy, a joint venture with Moscow to build a $300 million gas pipeline from Russia to the Balkans. Lukanov was furious.

Lukanov decided to get even and let it be known he was using his secret police contacts to compile damaging files on Orion. The day before he was killed he visited his friend Andrey Raichev, head of the Bulgarian branch of Gallup. Mr Raichev says: "He told me, 'Everything is finished. They are through'." According to his friend, Lukanov had confronted Mr Videnov with the files and had forced him to agree to step down on October 12.

But whether or not Lukanov's killing was directly linked to the BSP power struggle, the files point to a network of corruption close to the heart of the government and lay bare the workings of Bulgaria's sick economy.

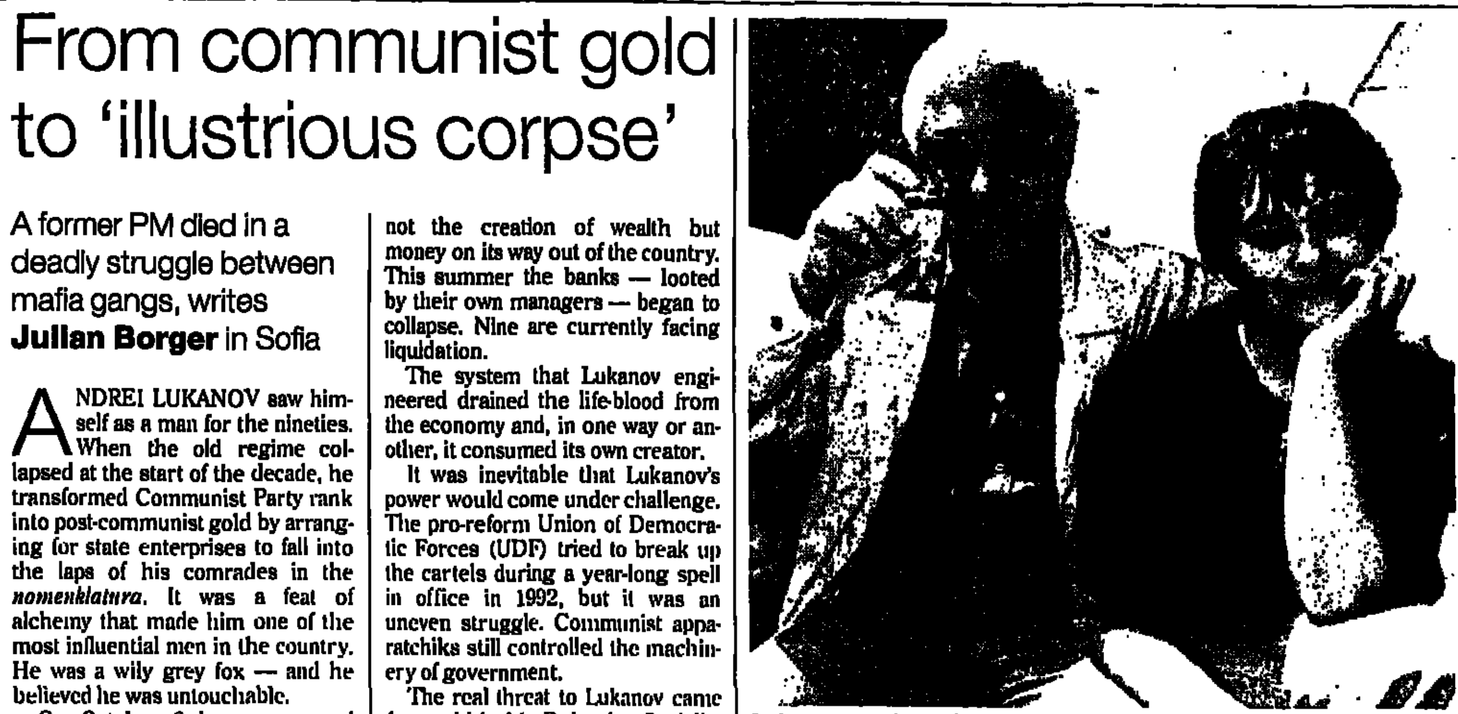
One of the documents is an interrogation on July 24, 1995, by the interior ministry's Centre for Combating Organised Crime of a businessman called Pavel Trenev — a money-raiser for Orion and its boss, Rumen Spasov. Mr Trenev gave details of how millions of dollars were channelled out of state-run financial institutions into Orion companies in 1994 and 1995, in just the same way as Lukanov had built his own empire. He also explained how hundreds of thousands of dollars flowed from Orion to the BSP newspapers Duma and Novini and to the party election campaign fund in 1994.

Mr Trenev has since disappeared, and the interior ministry denies any knowledge of his whereabouts.

Cecka Petrova, the chief accountant at Sofiabank, has also disappeared. Veska Medzhidieva, Rumen Spasov's wife and chairwoman of the Orion-owned Bulgarian Agricultural and Industrial Bank, is thought to have fled to South Africa.

Atanas Tilev, a Lukanov ally who bought a stake in BAC and then blew the whistle on its activities, has retreated to Vienna after a bomb was planted in his garden on the same day that Lukanov was shot.

Bulgarians voted last weekend for a new president, but few believe it will change much or improve the country's parlous state. They are almost certainly right. Breaking the power of Orion and the other "economic groups" could mean virtually going to war with the mafia and the nomenklatura. If such a war is ever waged, Lukanov will be remembered as its first victim. — *The Observer*



Lukanov as prime minister with his daughter Amy PHOTO: KLAUS REISINGER

Socialist setback in presidential polls

Elisaveta Konstantinova in Sofia

BULGARIA'S ruling ex-communists suffered the worst defeat in their history in presidential polls last weekend, losing a million votes from an electorate weary of economic crisis, preliminary results showed on Monday.

With almost all results counted, the opposition candidate Petar Stoyanov had a clear lead but was short of a first round majority. A second round will be held this Sunday.

Mr Stoyanov led with 44.9 per cent of the vote, according to the electoral commission, with his Socialist rival, Ivan Marazov, trailing second with 26.9 per cent.

Mr Stoyanov, a 44-year-old lawyer, said that if elected he would work towards bringing Bulgaria close to Nato and the European Union.

The 62 per cent turnout was much lower than the 75 per cent recorded for the 1994 parliamentary election.

Prime minister Zhan Videnov's government has a secure majority in parliament, where real power lies. But analysts expect the result to widen splits within the Socialists and increase pressure for an early general election. — *Reuter*

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Arkansas pays a price for Clinton's success



The US this week

Martin Walker

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE: In B B King's Blues club on historic Beale Street, the only sign that there is an election under way is a discreet Clinton-Gore bumper sticker pasted under the posters that say "Performing Tonite". It is the kind of place where the whites dress casually and the blacks look impeccable in double-breasted suits and costume jewellery, where the barbecue ribs are as sweet as the music in this city that bred the blues.

The proportions are just right. The stage is bigger that the bar, and the Preston Shannon band is playing a mean rock-a-billy blues that could have come from B B King's own guitar, hanging in a glass case on the wall.

"Heck yes, I'm gonna vote. We always votes in Memphis," says John Williams, taking a cigarette break after playing what he's known for along the Mississippi river, one of the finest bass guitar solos you're ever likely to hear. "It's not just because Clinton is a musician," Williams grins, straightening the sharp lapel of his suit. "That ain't it. But I tell you one thing, this is the quietest election I ever did see."

Just down Beale Street, beyond the local cop precinct house that is also a 24-hour police museum, there is a huge green banner that says "Elect Silky O'Sullivan to Congress — District 9". Right alongside is Silky O'Sullivan's bar, with the motto "Every Day is St Patrick's Day".

Inside, the bar is pasted with testimonials to Silky as world statesman, bringing Memphis barbecued pork to Moscow in 1990 in his "Pig-O-Stroika" mission, and a huge portrait of Elvis with the label "Another Satisfied Customer".

Silky has about as much chance of winning the 9th District as Elvis. In the city with the highest proportion of blacks in America, more than 40 per cent, the 9th is the fiefdom of the Ford family, and Harold Ford Junior will not only inherit his father's seat, but could bring out enough of the black vote to ensure that the Clinton-Gore ticket carries the 11 electoral college votes of Tennessee.

It would be a profound humiliation for Al Gore if the Democrats falter in Gore's home state, and a real setback to his hopes of the Democratic succession in 2000. That explains why Gore has been home campaigning in Tennessee 10 times this season, and why his wife Tipper is here when the vice-president is elsewhere.

The precedents are grim. Tennessee was the state most transformed by the 1994 congressional elections. The Republicans won the governorship, both US Senate seats, and five of the nine House seats.

This time, the one Senate seat up for re-election is almost certain to be held by the folksy and popular 6ft 5in Republican lawyer-turned-actor, Fred Thompson. He leads in the polls by 2:1, helped along by President Clinton's attack on tobacco as "the delivery system for the addictive drug of nicotine", in a state where tobacco comes second only to cotton as a cash crop.

The Democrats have a sporting chance of winning back two of the congressional seats they lost two years ago, but the curious feature of Tennessee politics is the way it is now becoming a bellwether for the way the nation votes. Voter registration is the key. One third of the voters are registered as Democrats, one third as Republican, and one third as Independents. This is not just a state of swing voters, but of split-ticket voting, in which Tennesseans increasingly vote one party for president, another for governor, and back to the first for the Senate and then back to the second for the House seat.

"Tennessee reacts to individuals more than to parties," Senator Thompson told the Guardian. "I'd say the state is split evenly among the parties — I was never under the impression that 1994 was a Republican thing in Tennessee."

Politicians here count heavily on their personal vote, which explains why the Republican Congressman Ed Bryant is running TV ads that feature his mother explaining what a good congressman her son has become.

"I don't think Fred Thompson has coat-tails, and I don't think Bill Clinton does either," says state Democratic chairman Will Cheek, who is telling all his candidates that they have to win on their own, and not count on Clinton-Gore and the national party ticket to carry them home. "If more people get out to vote for President Clinton, it will build the turnout of people likely to vote for other Democrats. But you can't count on it. The question will be, will it help enough. You can't poll that sort of thing," he says.

Cross the venerable iron girder bridge across the wide Mississippi from Tennessee to Arkansas, and you leave one sign that boasts "Tennessee — the home of Vice-President Al Gore", and then see another: "Welcome to Arkansas, home of President Bill Clinton". And the curious feature of this election year is that Clinton and Gore appear to be sweeping the national election, but they have left something like scorched earth behind for the Democratic parties of their home states.

In the waterlogged fields of Arkansas by the Mississippi river, the remnants of the cotton buds flutter in the wind like scattered white flags trying belatedly to surrender to the harvesting machines which picked the shrubs almost clean. The air is crystal-clear after a storm, the sky still surly with tumbling clouds. Black men tinker with pickup trucks outside flimsy shacks where ugly dogs doze on the porches. This is about as poor as rural America gets.

"It's been a banner year. Great crops, great prices. The farmers got a smile on their faces for the first time since about 1973," says Marion Berry, Democratic candidate for the First Congressional District in Arkansas.

There is relief in his voice, a politician assessing a factor which might help him win a tight race. And that is the oddity. The First District is known as the Delta, home of the "Yeller Dawgs", people so loyal they would vote for a yellow dog if it ran on the Democratic ticket. Dirt poor and with a strong black vote, it should be a safe seat in a traditionally Democratic state, particularly as the president from Arkansas looks bound for easy re-election.

BUT WHEN Bill Clinton went to Washington four years ago, the deluge hit his party back home. His successor as governor, Jim Guy Tucker, is currently appealing against his conviction for fraud. The governor's mansion is now occupied by a Republican, and so are two of the state's four congressional seats. And the Democrats are fighting desperately this year to hold the Senate seat just vacated by Senator David Pryor, one of Clinton's predecessors as governor, in those recent days when Arkansas was a one-party state.

"When the president went to Washington, a lot of our best Democratic people went with him. That's why I'm in a tight race here," says Berry. He was one of them, working in the Clinton administration as a special assistant for farm policy until he came home to campaign for the First District.

"As they have been busy running the country, it just stripped our party leadership back here at home. And this is a small state — it needs all of us to do it. We're thin on the ground, and the Republican party has poured unheard-of sums into Arkansas to take it away from us. It's tough to campaign against people with unlimited funds," Berry says.

But the Democratic party of Arkansas has also been psychologically devastated by the toll the Clinton presidency has visited on the sons of Arkansas who went with him to Washington. The White House aide Vince Foster is dead by his own hand. Webb Hubbell, former mayor of Little Rock and a judge on the state's supreme court, is in prison. Others resigned in disgrace or despair as the Whitewater mess made Arkansas appear an American Transylvania, a corrupt and dangerous rural backwater of casual ethics and insider deals.

"You could say that Clinton's departure left the Democratic party in disarray, if there had been any party to begin with. But there wasn't. What you had was a cult of personality, and the personality left town," Gene Lyons, a columnist on the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, says. "There was a Clinton cult, and a cult for his two predecessors as governor, David Pryor and Dale Bumpers, who each went on to the US Senate. Clinton's gone. Pryor has retired, and Bumpers ain't running this year. So there ain't much of a party."

Nor was the personality cult that effective. Clinton carried his home state in the 1992 presidential election with 55 per cent of the vote, the same as Michael Dukakis had got four years earlier. George Bush got more votes among Arkansans under the age of 40 than Clinton did.

The party's disrepair is hurting their congressional races. In the Third District, the Democratic candidate Bryce Davis withdrew last month, complaining of too little support from the party. The Democrats scrambled to find another candidate. In the Fourth District, which includes Clinton's home town of Hope, the Republican Congressman Jay Dickey looked vulnerable this year. But the only candidate the Democrats could find was a 29-year-old unknown, a para-legal with Hillary Clinton's ill-fated Rose law firm.

"It's an open question whether Arkansas is just following the Southern trend, of a traditionally Democratic state with a lot of social and religious conservatives shifting to the Republicans, or whether the Clinton factor and the fraud conviction of Governor Tucker make this a special case," says Tim Kasseler, acting editor of the Wynne Progress, a country weekly with a circulation of 3,500.

Either way, this casts a shadow over Clinton's Arkansas legacy. And what Arkansas cannot understand is his reluctance to come back and campaign at home, for the troubled state and beleaguered party which sent him to Washington. "He had me to an event in Memphis back in early September," says Berry. But Memphis is back across the Mississippi river in Tennessee.

The grim Democratic prospects in Tennessee and Arkansas may reflect a national trend. The political tides of presidential and congressional elections seldom flow in harmony. In 1972, the Republican President Richard Nixon won re-election by a landslide, but the Democrats won two Senate seats — a phenomenon which could easily be repeated this year.

CLINTON may be far ahead in the presidential polls, but in the US Senate the Democrats look more likely to lose seats than the Republicans. The two chief reasons for this are the slow, historic shift of the Southern states to the Republican camp, and the large number of veteran Democrats retiring this year. The outgoing US Senate, to which each state elects two senators, contains 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats. To win back their majority, the Democrats must gain three seats, because in a Senate split 50-50, the vice-president holds a casting vote. But their immediate problem is to overcome their likely losses.

In Alabama, the Democrats appear certain to lose Howell Heflin's seat, which the party has held for more than 100 years. They will have trouble holding Senator Pryor's seat in Arkansas. Despite the retirement of three well-respected senators in Sam Nunn, Bill Bradley and Bennett Johnston, the Democrats are fighting hard and should retain those Senate seats in Georgia, New Jersey and Louisiana. But if the Democrats lose any one of them, they can virtually write off their dream of regaining the Senate. Two other incumbent Democrats, John Kerrey in Massachusetts and Paul Wellstone in Minnesota, are fighting desperately to ward off strong Republican challengers.

The Democrats will make some gains, but probably not enough. They appear poised to win a Senate seat from an incumbent Republican in New Hampshire, and have a good chance in Colorado and Wyoming where two veteran Republicans are retiring. Their hopes of unseating the nonagenarian Strom Thurmond in South Carolina, and the isolationist old reactionary Jesse Helms of North Carolina, have faltered with the unimpressive campaigns of their Democratic challengers.

Such local factors can have a disproportionate effect on the shape and direction of the next Senate. It would, for example, allow a Republican-run Senate to resume its vendetta-like Whitewater inquiries into the Clintons in what appears to be an inevitable second term.

MACNELLY Chicago Tribune

I TOLD THEM ABOUT HIS CHARACTER. NOW HE'S SWEARING IN PUBLIC.

...DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR...

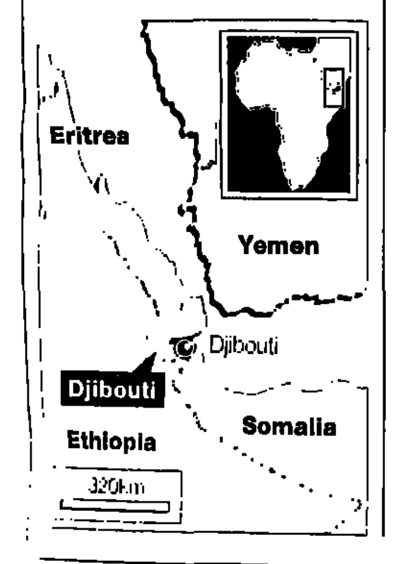
GUARDIAN WEEKLY
November 3 1996

Djibouti's social fabric is unravelling as an Aids epidemic cripples the country, writes **Alice Martin**

Women pay price for drug culture

"DJIBOUTI for us is a place to make money. All my girlfriends were sending gold back to their families, so I came thinking I would do the same. I started as a house girl, then I went into prostitution, but I started losing my sight. I became sicker and sicker and now look at me."

Safia, aged 19, is thin with Aids. She came to Djibouti from Dessie in north-east Ethiopia — an area touched by famine — and, like dozens of other Ethiopian and Somali women swelling the numbers of clandestine immigrants to a state of half a million people, she has ended up in the country's principal profession: prostitution. Now, in addition to other economic woes, Djibouti is being crippled by Aids.



The country produces salt and fish, neither of which has been commercially exploited on a large scale. It also supports France's largest military base overseas, as well as providing its giant neighbour Ethiopia, which has a population of more than 55 million, with an outlet to the sea.

However, since the end of the Ethiopian civil war in 1991, the trade in international food aid has switched to the Eritrean port of Assab. And despite a fairly strong currency, the country's economy has plunged dramatically, compounded by a three-year rebellion by ethnic Afars that ended in December 1994.

Now Djibouti must fight Aids. But with a government preoccupied with the health of its ageing president, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, individual efforts to combat the disease are lost in an ocean of ignorance.

"The common perception is that the disease is confined to foreigners and to Ethiopian immigrants in particular," said Hasna Mohammed, of the Female Solidarity support group. "But everybody has got it now . . . Ethiopians, Somalis and Djiboutians." Dr Hasna estimates that "5 to 10 per cent of the population are HIV positive and that runs right through society".

The link between the prevalence of Aids and the 4,000-strong French garrison is not clear, but prostitution has thrived in its presence. The so-called "bar-girls", who serve the well-to-do, are the lucky ones; their earnings are good and they work with people who are aware of the risk of Aids.



A street seller in Djibouti shows off a bunch of qat, a vital source of income for poor women PHOTOGRAPH: IAN WILLIAMS

But prostitutes in the *quartiers*, commonly known as "Coca-Cola girls", earn as little as 50 cents per client. Because of the intense competition, they are unable to reject men who mistreat them and refuse to wear condoms. Fifty-five per cent of Coca-Cola girls have tested HIV positive, as opposed to 25 per cent of bar girls.

An important factor in the rate of HIV infection is the prevalence of qat, a green-leaf narcotic grown in Ethiopia and flown in daily to meet demand for the drug in Djibouti. More than one-third of the average family income is spent on qat.

Offices close at lunchtime and afternoons are spent in qat-sessions in the shade. "When men come to us, they are always drugged up on qat," Safia said. "Sometimes they beat us if we refuse sex without a condom. Sometimes they pay more. We have to accept or there is no work."

Qat-chewing was viewed until 20 years ago as a pastime for the rich. Now it is a vital source of earnings for women in the lowest income bracket. It is only the most restrained who do not chew. Asnia, a qat-seller for 20 years and mother of 10, said: "We just sell it not to be hungry."

At lunchtime the delivery arrives by air from Dire Dawa in Ethiopia. At a speed that no other cargo distribution can match, qat is available within the hour from rows of women sitting behind piles of damp sackcloth concealing the leaves.

General helps the homeless

THE misery is different but the mission the same, *writes Alex Duval Smith in Paris*. In March 1993, General Philippe Morillon mounted an armoured personnel carrier and told the people of Srebrenica: "You are under my protection."

Now, France's greatest military hero since De Gaulle has thrown in his lot with the homeless of Paris.

But the retired general knows the odds are stacked against him even more than they were in the besieged Muslim enclave.

In Srebrenica, which he temporarily saved by promising to stay, Gen Morillon defied the bureaucratic inertia of the United Nations. Alain Juppé, then foreign minister, called him "General Courage".

In Paris, they have stopped counting the cardboard boxes with people inside. Gen Morillon, who was 61 last week, wants to draw attention to them. He said: "I want to be among them — to be the person who listens and advises, not just a figurehead." Every Tuesday he has lunch in a soup kitchen near the Louvre.

A devout Roman Catholic, he is backing the plans of a priest he has known for 30 years to open a college in Paris where young people will spend a year studying the Scriptures and providing practical assistance to the homeless. Homelessness and spiritual renewal are unfashionable causes, but Gen Morillon has made a career of them.

Street fight in Japan over drink

Vending machines that sell alcohol have become a cause for concern. **Jonathan Watts** reports from Tokyo

A CROWD of teenagers at a bar in central Tokyo chant the Japanese mantra for "Down-in-one", reaching a climax as one of their number gulps down the last drops of her beer.

A few minutes later, after a second round, she collapses on to the table, semi-conscious.

Japanese law prohibits the sale of alcohol to anyone under the age of 20 but, as the owner of the bar said, "The law is a joke. They are under age, but they could go and get as much beer as they wanted, no questions asked, from any street corner vending machine."

Japan is the only country in the world where alcohol is sold from vending machines. An estimated 186,000 of them throughout the nation dispense beer, *schochu* (distilled liquor), whisky and wine. It is also a country with a growing alcohol problem. But despite government calls for the removal of alcohol vending machines, they are as ubiquitous as ever.

Japan has more than one vending machine for every 30 people, the highest ratio in the world. Selling everything from soft drinks to sex aids, they have become an established feature since their introduction in the 1950s.

Their popularity is partly because of their convenience and partly because, it is said, they allow shame-conscious Japanese to purchase goods that they would otherwise feel embarrassed to buy.

However, in recent years the vending machines that sell alcohol have become a growing cause for concern. Koshio Genya, the spokesman for an alcohol counselling group, said the machines have made it easy for anyone to buy alcohol with no questions asked. "They have been cited as a contributory factor in an increasing number of the cases we deal with," he said.

Recent surveys indicate there are more under-age drinkers than ever, half of whom admit their main supply was vending machines. This has prompted tax and health officials, and some local authorities, to call for alcohol vending machines to be removed from the streets.

The All Japan Liquor Merchants Association agreed to co-operate in December 1994, but since then there has been little progress. Only about 8 per cent of the machines have been phased out, and no deadline has been set for the removal of the rest.

Instead, brewers and vending-machine makers have proposed waiting until a system is developed to enable them to read identity cards and check a buyer's age.

Part of the reason for the inertia is the cultural acceptance of drinking, even to excess. Buddhist funerals and Shinto rites to mark the birth of a baby both involve ceremonial alcohol. Cherry blossom viewing in spring and *Bonenkai* parties in December have also come to be associated with heavy consumption of beer, sake and whisky.

While alcohol drinking has declined in most countries in the past 20 years, it has risen rapidly in Japan, particularly among women.

But the problems associated with heavy drinking are still not fully recognised, despite the emergence of expressions such as "necktie [businessman] alcoholic" and "kitchen [housewife] drinker" to describe new social phenomena.

Masaya Kawada, a doctor specialising in alcohol-related problems, said the failure to remove the alcohol vending machines would make matters worse in future.

"Much was promised, but almost nothing has been done. It seems that the alcohol lobby is too strong and, probably also, Japanese people too tolerant of drinking," he said.

Paris 'profits from looted Jewish land'

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

THE MAYOR of Paris has ordered a deed-search on buildings being sold off by the city, after claims that hundreds were expropriated from Jews killed in Nazi concentration camps.

The rightwing mayor, Jean Tiberi, ordered the search after it was revealed that President Jacques Chirac's brother-in-law lives in a luxury council flat built on land that belonged to an antiques dealer who was murdered at Auschwitz.

After it became known this year that dozens of members of the French establishment live at peppercorn rents in luxury flats owned by the city, Mr Tiberi ordered that they should be sold as they become vacant.

Historians believe nearly half the property assets being auctioned for millions of francs were signed over to the city of Paris by the collaborationist Vichy regime during the second world war. Hundreds of flats in up to 500 buildings could, it is claimed, be expropriated property.

These include luxury buildings in the trendy Marais district, which until the war was known as the Pletzl — Yiddish for area. In 1940 the area had 25,000 residents — primarily East European Jews who had settled there in the 1930s. At the end of the war, only 5,000 remained.

Leftwing city councillors want a full-scale investigation. They fear deed searches will provide insufficient proof of expropriation since buildings were signed over legally, under special legislation created by the Vichy regime.

In a new book, Domaine Privé (Private Domain), Brigitte Vital-Durand argues that an "administrative pogrom" accompanied the Jewish genocide. She says that using bylaws banning "insalubrious habitation", the city took over vast tracts of land whose Jewish occupants were sent to Nazi death camps.

Mrs Vital-Durand claims that while Mr Chirac was mayor of Paris from 1977 to 1994, his brother-in-law moved into a modern block of flats in the Marais built on land belonging to Elias Zadjner, a Jewish antiques' dealer who died at Auschwitz in 1944.

Sarah Zadjner recently won permission to place a marble plaque on the building, in memory of her father's deportation. But lawyers say that were she to attempt to claim ownership of the land, she would face a bureaucratic minefield trying to overturn once-legal ordinances.

Historians concede that even if an investigation were to take place, it would be difficult to establish ownership rights. Entire families were annihilated in Nazi camps and few descendants have proof of ownership.

● Britain knew about a secret deal to misappropriate funds in Swiss banks belonging to Holocaust victims but failed to prevent the money from being given away to Swiss businessmen, according to documents.

Newly declassified American papers reveal that Britain made an official protest to the Swiss authorities in 1949 about an agreement to transfer the unclaimed funds to the Polish National Bank.

Loot up for grabs, page 27

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Conservatives to hand out lesson in 'morality'

AS POLITICIANS of all parties joined in the rush to endorse God and righteousness, so the Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, suggested that the Government intended to toughen up a new "moral code" for schools to include greater emphasis on traditional marriages. The code could become the basis of lessons in citizenship.

This was an indirect response to an appeal last week by Frances Lawrence, whose husband Philip was knifed to death by a 16-year-old boy outside the school where Philip was headmaster. She called for a national campaign to curb violence and promote good citizenship, and immediately won the backing of the three main political parties.

Mixing God and religion with politics, however, is not going down as well as expected. Only six out of ten children now live with married parents, and there is already controversy among teachers and politicians over a draft moral code compiled by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community. Five members of the 150-member forum refused to back the code because, although it mentioned the value of families, it failed specifically to mention marriage. Mrs Shephard has chosen to back the dissenters.

"Morals are not the preserve of those who are married," warned David Hart, secretary of the head teachers' union. He said that Mrs Shephard "risked condemning the many who bring up children in a moral environment single-handedly".

Nigel de Gruchy, secretary of the teaching union, NAS/UWT, took it a step further saying that "teachers and pupils will be sickened by the mindbending hypocrisy of the sleaze-ridden Conservative party lecturing the nation on morality".

Crisis in schools, page 10

TONY BLAIR'S ride on the bandwagon of moral revival put him at risk of angering the Roman Catholic clergy when he ruled out any prospect that a Labour government would legislate to ban abortion. He was responding to an attack by Cardinal Thomas Winning, head of the Catholic Church in Scotland, who had said of Mr Blair: "He says he doesn't agree with abortion . . . but he doesn't condemn it or have a policy on it."

This particular spat arose from the Catholic Church's document, The Common Good, which ran into a barrage of Tory criticism because it spoke of "morality in the marketplace" and favoured a minimum wage, and was, therefore, considered to be an endorsement of Labour. Mr Blair believes that abortion is a matter for individual MPs' consciences and said he deplored efforts by anyone to make it a party political issue.

CAMELOT, which runs the National Lottery, was given the go-ahead to introduce a midweek draw which is expected to increase ticket sales (currently £2.30 per player) by up to 30 per cent and provide an additional £6 million in prizes each week. The lottery regulator, Peter Davis, brushed aside widespread objections from churches and anti-gambling organisations, denying it would lead to excessive participation.

Although lottery profits were originally intended to be used in grants for projects which would not normally be funded by government, a new National Heritage Bill will dilute that concept and allow grants to be made to private and commercial applicants. This will make money available for historic houses and listed buildings, two-thirds of which are privately owned. The limited government cash available for them is being cut by £44 million over four years.

ALTHOUGH an 18-month-old boy will die unless he has a liver transplant, his parents were backed by appeal court judges in their decision not to subject him to the ordeal of the operation.

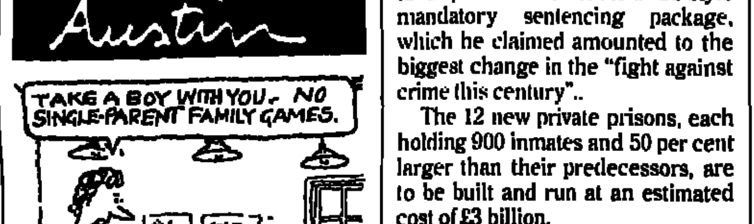
The parents, themselves health-care professionals, moved abroad just before a liver become available for a transplant, and the local social services department won a High Court ruling ordering them to bring the child home.

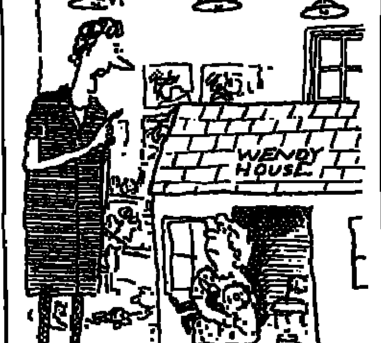
The operation has an 80 per cent chance of success, but the appeal judges ruled that the decision was one for the parents, who were well qualified to make it.

THREE accident victims awarded compensation for horrific physical and mental injuries had their awards drastically cut by the Court of Appeal. This was in response to complaints by defence insurers that judges were being too cautious in their estimates of the return victims could expect on the lump sums they were awarded.

A £1,619,000 award to a car crash victim was reduced by £532,000: a boy who suffered cerebral palsy at birth because of a hospital error had his award of £1,285,000 reduced by £300,000; and a steelworker's damages of £906,000 after being speared by a red-hot metal bar were cut by £280,000.

Appeal judges found that the judges who made the awards had fixed them higher than normal after accepting evidence that the only safe way to invest the money was in low-risk government securities (earning around 3 per cent), rather than a 4.5 per cent return expected from equities and gilts.





Salvage expert Colin Martin with a bell he discovered off the north Cornwall coast PHOTO: ROB

Silence is golden for diver given treasure rights

AFTER two years biting his lips to prevent the secret slipping out, Cornwall-based diver Colin Martin can begin to relax. The shipwreck he came across while diving near St Agnes is believed by experts to be the richest found in British waters, *writes Geoffrey Gibbs.*

He has now secured salvage rights to bring the vessel and its cargo to the surface.

In 1763 the Hanover, a 100ft two-masted Packet Service brig, left Lisbon bound for Falmouth. Its cargo included gold bullion, which would be valued at at least £50 million at today's prices.

On December 13 the ship was swamped by a storm and sank with all hands off the north Cornwall coast.

Mr Martin, aged 35, a demolitions expert and diver, heard the legend when he first moved to Cornwall from Derbyshire 10 years ago and became obsessed with finding the Hanover's last resting place.

When he did so after a seven-year quest, it was by chance. "The sand had been dragged out by the sea and the whole ship was exposed. The ship itself is amazing. It has even got the bottom decks still there."

Among the items he recovered from the sea bed were the ship's bronze bell — said to be the only packet bell still in existence — and a mourning ring worn by the Hanover's captain, Joseph Sherburn.

Officially, the Hanover is still owned by the Post Office, the successor organisation to the packet service whose ships carried mail and freight all over the world from 1688 to 1852.

Last month a salvage agreement was thrashed out between Mr Martin's salvage company, Post Office representatives and the Government's Receiver of Wrecks. The agreement could eventually see the Hanover's remains brought to the surface.

Crime bill sets jail numbers soaring

MICHAEL HOWARD, the Home Secretary, has set Britain on the road to overtake some of the world's most oppressive regimes for jailing offenders, *reports Alan Travis.*

Last week's draconian Crime (Sentences) Bill, which introduces minimum sentences for repeat offenders, will put England and Wales on a par with south-east Asian countries like Malaysia and Thailand. Similar legislation is planned for Scotland.

Mr Howard promised to build at least 12 new private "super-prisons". The extra 11,000 jail places will double the prison space built since 1979 to implement his radical US-style mandatory sentencing package, which he claimed amounted to the biggest change in the "fight against crime this century"..

The 12 new private prisons, each holding 900 inmates and 50 per cent larger than their predecessors, are to be built and run at an estimated cost of £3 billion.

They come on top of the six private prisons already ordered by Mr Howard to cope with the surge in jail numbers.

The expansion in the prison system will leave the rest of the European Union far behind in the world custody league. The prison population in England and Wales is at a record 57,633.

The legislation faces stiff opposition. The mandatory minimum sentences for third-time drug dealers and burglars and the automatic life sentences for repeat rapists and violent offenders will be phased in as the prisons are built. Mr Howard insisted it would be worthwhile: "These are very radical proposals. . . Apart from murder and driving offences, we have never had minimum sentences in our law."

He said it was necessary for Parliament to override the criticisms of the senior judges to protect the public from those rapists and violent criminals who struck again after being caught, and from career burglars and drug dealers.

Penal reformers said "the radical departure" will not only mean widespread use of American-style mandatory minimum sentences but also an American-style penal system. They claimed that once the public taste for punishment on this scale had been fed it would be difficult for any politician to reverse.

The former Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson, led the opposition of senior judges to Mr Howard's new crime bill, warning of the parliamentary battles he faces ahead to get it on to the statute book.

Among the miscellaneous measures in the bill are plans to use electronic tagging for persistent petty offenders and a decision by Mr Howard to ensure that it is the Parole Board and not the Home Secretary which sets the actual sentences served by child killers, such as the boys who murdered Jamie Bulger.

Deportation hits record

Alan Travis

A RECORD 17,800 people face deportation as the Government's crackdown on illegal entrants and asylum seekers starts to bite, Home Office figures published last week show.

There were 3,100 deportation notices issued in the 12 months to June, 20 per cent up on the previous year.

The rise has not yet been matched by an increase in actual removals, which remain at around 5,000, because, according to the Home Office, an increasing percentage of those facing deportation are lodging asylum claims.

The number of asylum seekers whose applications for refugee status were refused rose by 7,000 to 26,300. Only 2,600 people were allowed to remain in Britain as refugees or because they had been given "exceptional leave to remain" in the year to the end of June — mostly from Iraq, Somalia, former Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan.

● A battered wife from Pakistan, who fears being stoned to death if forced to return, won a High Court decision which could pave the way for more women in her position to claim asylum in the UK. The judge ruled that wives rejected by their husbands for alleged adultery in such circumstances were a "social group" entitled to protection under the 1951 UN refugees convention.

Major buckles as Labour calls his bluff

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR'S impromptu and unprecedented decision to reinstate bills on stalkers and paedophiles in the Government's legislative programme after Tony Blair promised co-operation last week threw into disarray Government hopes of a fresh start to the election campaign.

Mr Major's about-turn came during the Commons debate following the Queen's Speech, which had confirmed the Government's refusal to address the two issues.

Labour was jubilant over a propaganda coup, though it overshadowed Mr Blair's call for an immediate election to mend "the fractured society" — divided by 17 years of irresponsible government. Paddy Ashdown called it "the fastest U-turn in history".

After 24 hours of skirmishing over the Cabinet's unexpected decision to confine the two measures to the hazardous private member's bill procedure, Mr Blair had challenged Mr Major across the despatch box.

"Bring forward those bills as government bills, on stalking, on paedophiles, and we will co-operate to put them through this House without delay."

In an "impromptu" Cabinet meeting in the Commons chamber, Mr Major consulted Michael Howard, Michael Heseltine and Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons, before telling MPs he accepted the offer.

Later, in ill-tempered exchanges with John Prescott, Mr Heseltine insisted ministers had exposed Mr Blair's "hypocrisy" on crime and extracted a categorical pledge of co-operation from him.

Tory MPs seemed less than delighted at what was bound to be presented as further proof of government drift. But it is unlikely to be the last such manoeuvre before May 1, the expected election date. Both sides are braced for an increasingly populist bidding war between the parties on the main themes in the Queen's Speech — crime, education, and health.

Mr Blair's allies said Mr Major had been "panicked in mid-speech into conceding Labour's case" by the dramatic offer in a crowded Commons. But some opposition MPs feared the Government might be tempted to strengthen the two bills in the hope of provoking party political confrontation that could be exploited in the election.

Labour said it would not be bullied into rubber-stamping unjustifiable changes.

Old Westminster hands could not remember an occasion in 30 years when ministers had decided at the 13th hour to reverse a decision to leave two bills to the "lottery" of the private members' ballot. Ministers had claimed that, as "non-controversial" measures, they would stand a better chance of becoming law quickly as private member's bills, despite the vulnerability to filibuster.

On Tuesday last week key ministers had said on radio and TV that the alternative option, to include the register of paedophiles and the anti-stalking bill in Mr Howard's new Crime Bill, would jeopardise them as the short 13-bill session ends, probably in April.

Harassed by Labour's Jack Straw and Peter Mandelson on paedophilia, the Home Secretary said on BBC radio: "The Government [has] been drafting a bill. It will be made available to a private member and I want to see it on the statute book as soon as possible."

Mr Straw upped the stakes by demanding action against combat knives and the promised Government bill on sex tourism, thwarted in the last session.

The speech by the Lib Dem leader, Mr Ashdown, echoed Mr Blair's complaint that the main thrust of the Queen's Speech was "a ragbag of irrelevant measures from a government in its tormented twilight days".

Tony Blair later dismissed the Queen's Speech as the product of a drifting government acting as if it had "just landed from Mars" and which refused to take responsibility for the "fractured society" it had created over 17 years in office.

Launching the Commons debate on the speech, the Labour leader branded it a thin and largely irrelevant programme of legislation, and said the country needed and wanted an immediate general election instead.

But Mr Major firmly rejected the criticism and insisted that his legislative programme was "by any yardstick . . . a meaty Queen's Speech that we intend to carry through in the period between now and the election".

He pledged that the Government would deliver a "prudent" Budget this month, adding: "If we can safely cut taxes, we will. If we cannot, we will not."

Mr Ashdown complained that too much of politics was now in the hands of spin doctors and soundbites, which meant that people were lied to about tax, kept in the dark about the true state of the economy and left out of the debate on the future of Europe.

Mr Ashdown said that, despite billions from North Sea oil and privatisation, the NHS was in crisis and class sizes were increasing. The most glaring bungling of all was over the BSE crisis. "This Government seems to believe that BSE stands for Blame Somebody Else. But farmers are not fooled, they know where the blame lies — with the Government."

Scientists find human BSE link

Tim Radford

BRITISH scientists last week disclosed the first experimental evidence that so-called mad cow disease has been transmitted to humans through infected beef.

As the Department of Health admitted the findings indicated a direct link, European Union officials warned that they meant ruling out even a partial lifting of the beef export ban.

The Meat and Livestock Commission sought to reassure consumers by claiming current measures had assumed the worst-case scenario.

Researchers at the Imperial College School of Medicine at St Mary's hospital, London, have identified what they call a molecular marker which sets apart from other forms of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease a recently identified variant which is thought to be linked to infected beef.

The CJD variant — known as nvCJD — which affects younger people, was first identified in March and has so far killed 14 people. As well as differentiating the new variant of CJD from other forms, the newly discovered marker is almost indistinguishable from the molecular hallmark of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), better known as mad cow disease.

The discovery paves the way for new techniques to diagnose CJD and may eventually make it possible to detect it with a blood test.

Nerve gas cloud linked to Gulf war syndrome

David Fairhall

NERVE gas poisoning may soon be added to possible causes of the mysterious Gulf war syndrome being investigated by Ministry of Defence doctors following analysis by American intelligence of a lethal cloud that drifted towards British troops at the end of the 1991 war.

The scare comes as British research seemed to be homing in on a quite different suspect — large quantities of insecticides purchased locally.

The MoD has always maintained that no chemical weapons were used during the war, in spite of reports that Czech units detected traces of gas. The Pentagon has also recently admitted that two ammunition dumps blown up by US army engineers at Khamisiyah, in southern Iraq, turned out to contain many tons of unmarked sarin nerve gas.

A check ordered by the armed forces minister, Nicholas Soames, showed that British troops were concentrated 55km away in northern Kuwait, and that on March 4, when the first dump went up, a south-westerly wind carried the gas plume away across the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

However, last month the Pentagon made two further disclosures: that there may have been a third demolition involving nerve gas on March 12, location unspecified — and that two days earlier when the second, documented explosion took place, the wind was blowing from the north, towards Allied positions.

The Pentagon admitted that more than 20,000 American troops may, therefore, have been exposed to Iraqi nerve gas and that many more may turn out to have been affected when the Central Intelligence Agency's analysis of the second gas cloud's dispersal is completed.

The US Defence Department's admission is the latest among mounting estimates of those at risk, beginning with the 150 men who blew up the first Khamisiyah dump, containing 1,060 artillery rockets filled with 9.3 tons of sarin. The second dump contained 550 rockets with 4.8 tons of sarin.

The possibility that sarin may have reached some British troops will be seized upon by those who believe their illnesses can be traced back to the Gulf.

"I would treat with some scepticism the suggestion that no British troops were affected by this cloud," said Richard Barr, of the King's Lynn-based solicitors Dawbarns, representing more than 100 veterans claiming compensation from the MoD.

The symptoms attributed to Gulf war syndrome include chronic fatigue, memory loss and muscle pains, but many veterans suffer from more serious illnesses.

Hamilton ally joins cash for questions inquiry

David Hencke

THE Government has appointed a strong supporter of disgraced former minister Neil Hamilton and a fierce critic of the freedom of the press to sit in judgment on the cash for questions inquiry.

Sir Archibald Hamilton — a former defence minister who opposed the reforms of Lord Nolan forcing MPs to declare their salaries from consultancies and directorships — joined the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee last week.

On BBC radio last year Sir Archie gave a robust defence of Mr Hamilton and Jonathan Aitken, both of whom resigned ministerial jobs to sue the Guardian. He told the BBC on April 11, 1995: "We're coming under a tremendous amount of slur and innuendo by partisan members of the media to try and get rid of ministers. Somebody has got to stand up and fight this and I think we're all very glad indeed that Jonathan Aitken is doing that. It would have been very good if Neil Hamilton had been able to do the same."

Sir Archie joins the committee with the veteran Ernie Ross, Labour MP for Dundee West, after two MPs — Doug Hoyle, Labour MP for Warrington North, and Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith — resigned because they were connected with the cash for questions affair.

Sir Archie has a number of parliamentary consultancies which he has declared in full. He is also a privy counsellor and MP for Epsom and Ewell. He is a director of seven companies, including Saladin Holdings, a security company, and three Far East investment houses.

● A confidential document shows that Mr Hamilton tried to raise tens of thousands of pounds from wealthy corporate clients of the lobbyist, Ian Greer, to launch his own Deregulation Institute after he was forced to quit his government job.

The disclosure, on Channel 4 television, shows Mr Hamilton still had a close relationship with Mr Greer after he had resigned. At the time he denied any financial links with the lobbyist.

Hint of Labour split on single currency

Ewen MacAskill

ROBIN COOK, the shadow foreign secretary, sent tremors through both the Labour and Conservative leaderships on Sunday by providing his most sceptical assessment yet of Britain joining the European single currency in 1999.

Mr Cook, in a BBC interview which will bolster his reputation as the leading shadow cabinet Eurosceptic, gave strong hints that he would like to see Britain under a Labour government postpone entry.

The interview is the latest episode in long-running disagreements on various policies with Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor.

Mr Brown is strongly pro-European and keen to take Britain into the single currency. Tony Blair, who is also pro-European, will have to adjudicate between them.

If Mr Cook sent a tremor through the shadow cabinet, the shock waves were felt even more strongly among Conservatives. The party is fearful of being outflanked on Europe by Labour suddenly adopting a more Eurosceptical tone in the run-up to the election.

Mr Cook signalled that Britain under a Labour government would not be among the first wave of countries signing up to a single European currency. But he was careful not to stray beyond official Labour policy, which is to wait until closer to the time before making a decision.

Mr Cook said that if Britain did not join up in 1999 along with other countries in the first wave, the Conservatives would be partly to blame for failing to prepare the ground and other European countries would sympathise.

Mr Cook said that if the single currency proved successful in the medium term, "ultimately, you would then have to join".

Labour calls for combat knife ban

Kamal Ahmed, Michael White and Ewen MacAskill

POLITICIANS from all parties were this week moving towards a ban on combat knives as Michael Howard softened his stance against legislation to outlaw them. But the signs were that the Labour party was working on its own proposals.

Mr Howard, the Home Secretary, said he would ban combat knives, providing the difficulty of a workable definition could be found. There was a marked shift from his tone of last week, when he rejected Labour's offer to discuss how to surmount problems.

The Liberal Democrats gave a cautious welcome to an unofficial four-point plan emanating from Labour, with several barristers and police organisations indicating the unpublished document was a good starting point.

The four clauses forwarded propose that the suppliers of knives would be required to say what the knife was for; that the selling of knives designed for violence be made an offence; that the marketing and advertising of such knives would also be an offence; and that the police should keep a list of prohibited knife designs which suppliers would have to consult.

In a Queen's Speech debate on Monday, the shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, brandished a copy of Gun Mart and Accessories advertising combat knives. He said there was a palpable difference between kitchen knives and combat knives, which had "no purpose whatever but maiming and killing people, and should be banned".

Mr Howard has said he will meet Mr Straw, who launched a national petition on the knives issue, if a workable definition is on the table. The four proposals could be the first step towards that.

The Liberal Democrats gave a qualified welcome to the draft document. "I would certainly react favourably to the first three parts of the draft," said Alex Carlisle, the legal affairs spokesman, who is a QC and a part-time judge. "I believe that the parliamentary draughtsmen could turn them into workable legislation.

"Although defining the knives themselves is difficult, their marketing, display and sale is an appropriate target and could produce by agreement very workable legislation," he said.

The fourth proposal, which says that knife designs that are excessive for their intended purpose should be referred to the police, was more difficult to support as it could include some domestic knives.

The police have also given their backing to the proposals.

"It cannot be beyond the wit of the Government and parliament to arrive at a definition of these type of knives," said Jim Fraser, chairman of the Scottish Police Federation. "These knives are available in cities across the country, and although some legislation is there which can be used we are not against expanding that legislation."

A Home Office spokesman said there was a list of prohibited weapons under the 1988 Criminal Justice Act. Combat knives could be added if a definition could be found.

IS THIS A COMBAT KNIFE I SEE BEFORE ME?

Secret arms deal exposed

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE Government has secretly approved the supply of spare parts for Argentina's warships despite repeated assurances to Parliament that its export policy has remained unchanged since the Falklands conflict.

Senior Argentine naval officers and Rolls-Royce executives have disclosed that an effective ban on the parts was lifted last year. In a move with echoes of the arms-to-Iraq affair, the Department of Trade and Industry told Rolls-Royce in June last year that the export of parts for the Argentine navy did not, after all, breach Britain's arms embargo imposed in 1982. The initiative, described by the DTI as a "reassessment", was never disclosed to MPs.

The DTI said it reviewed Britain's embargo after Rolls-Royce told the Commons trade and industry committee in May 1995 that Argentina was becoming "increasingly frustrated at the UK government ban on the sale of spare parts . . ."

In July, the committee reported that the Argentine navy was "still using British equipment but is obviously unable to buy spare parts or replacements". The Government has never corrected the clear impression given to MPs that spare parts were covered by the embargo, though some ministers knew it was incorrect.

The Government seized the opportunity provided by the debate on the Scott arms-to-Iraq report in February to accuse Labour of hypocrisy for selling Argentina the warships in the seventies.

● Argentina this week failed to win a licence to explore for oil off the Falklands and will have to wait at least another two years before it can claim a share in an area geologists believe could rival the North Sea.

The first licences were awarded to consortia led by Amerada Hess, Shell and Lasmo.

Andrew Gurr, chief executive of the Falkland Islands government, said that the Argentine company, YPF, had "much to offer politically but commercially, it was not sufficiently attractive".



Furies unleashed . . . Storms lashed the Bournemouth seafront on Monday as the strongest winds since the hurricane of 1987 swept across Britain. Tens of thousands of homes from west Wales to East Anglia were blacked out as power lines crashed down in the face of 90mph winds — the potent remains of Hurricane Lili which hit Cuba last week. At least four lives were lost PHOTOGRAPH: LEIGH GREEN

Closed school fuels indiscipline fears

Donald MacLeod

THE discipline crisis in schools took another twist this week as the headteacher at a Nottinghamshire junior school announced he was closing it indefinitely in a row over a 10-year-old pupil accused of assaulting other pupils.

As members of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) threatened to strike over the unruly pupil, Matthew Wilson, his headteacher, Bill Skelley, cited health and safety grounds in closing Manton junior school, near Worksop. He wrote to parents, saying he was unable to guarantee the safety of the 200 children if the boy attended. The school closed on Tuesday.

The long-running dispute over the boy has set ministers, local authorities, teachers and governors at odds. The confrontation has fuelled fears of increasingly chaotic school management and discipline, after a crisis inspection at the Ridings school, in Halifax, and a national debate over morality and behaviour following the murder of the London headteacher Philip Lawrence.

Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, the local education authority, teachers' unions and school governors blamed each other for the failure to relieve the impasse over Matthew Wilson, whose mother insists he should be taught in normal lessons at Manton and not sent to a special school.

When the eight staff voted to strike if the boy returned to lessons, Fred Riddell, who chairs Nottinghamshire's education committee, intervened and the governors agreed in September to individual tuition. The governors have decided Matthew should return to classes, after spending £3,068 on a supply teacher for the boy.

Eileen Bennett, chairwoman of the governors, accompanied Matthew and his mother, Pamela Cliffe, into school on Monday despite a warning from the council. "I do not think it is a good idea to criminalise a 10-year-old by teaching him in isolation. Teachers have got powerful unions but children have nobody to speak up for them."

Meanwhile education officials in Calderdale, West Yorkshire, denied charges that they had failed to support the troubled Ridings school in Halifax, where a teachers' union claims that one in 10 pupils should be expelled.

Ian Jennings, Calderdale's director of education, said the Ridings, created from the merger of two secondary moderns less than two years ago, had not made reasonable progress. But the vast majority of pupils wanted to learn, he said.

He rejected claims by NASUWT, which represents 30 of the 42 staff, that 60 pupils should be excluded: "There is a small core of disruptive youngsters, probably of the order of 12 or 13."

The result of the union's ballot on strike action at the school is due on Thursday.

Mrs Shephard made it clear she was prepared to send in a squad to take control of the school.

In Brief

FEARS of a looming teacher shortage have prompted the Government to clamp down on the flood of early retirement deals for burnt-out staff. At the same time, ministers intend to make it easier for schools to make younger teachers redundant.

TWO men were held in London in connection with the IRA mortar attacks on Heathrow airport in March 1994. The IRA claimed to have carried out the attacks, taken as a sign that it was prepared to hit high-profile commercial targets.

THE Government's "snoopers hotline" is weeding out bogus jobless claimants and in September helped to produce the biggest fall in Britain's dole queues for almost two years, officials said.

CANCER experts have found no evidence to link the major water pollution incident that hit the Cornish town of Camelford eight years ago with a mystery leukaemia cluster at the town's secondary school.

THE Tory party has deprived its former treasurer, Lord McAlpine, of the party whip in the House of Lords because of his active support for Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum party.

MARTIN BELL, the 58-year-old television reporter who has covered 11 wars and been on assignments in more than 80 countries, has submitted his resignation to the BBC.

ANDREW NEIL, former editor of the Sunday Times is to become editor-in-chief of the Scotsman and other publications owned by the multi-millionaire twins, the Barclay brothers.

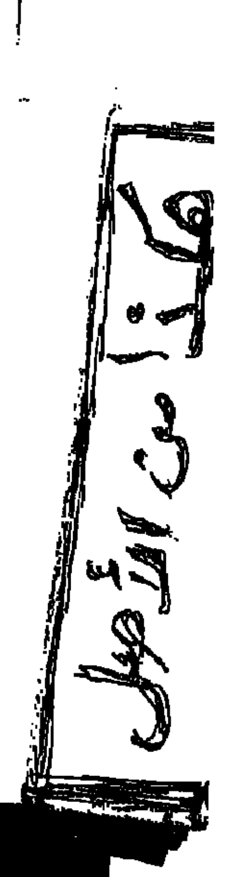
SAINSBURY and Asda supermarkets welcomed a campaign by Christian Aid that aims to highlight the human rights abuses of some suppliers. The charity has already singled out apples from South Africa, asparagus from Peru and tiger prawns from Thailand.

THE European Court of Human Rights rejected claims by four women who were sexually abused in childhood that the law requiring civil assault actions to be brought within the first six years of adulthood breached the convention on human rights.

GLADWYN JEBB, who was Britain's first United Nations permanent representative and a key figure in shaping the institutions of the post-war world, has died aged 96.

CHELSEA football club's vice-chairman, Matthew Harding, died in a helicopter accident, which claimed four other lives.





Turning from the abyss

A YEAR AFTER the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Israel — and the Palestinians — are still counting the cost. The atmosphere swirls with anguish and apprehension, intolerance and fanaticism. The peace process has been knocked off its course: the only question is whether it is going sideways or in reverse. What consensus there was among Jews, among Arabs, and between the two communities, has been sharply reduced; the only question is whether it survives at all. Looking back a year later, many are asking the hardest question of all: has the assassin actually won?

After Rabin was gunned down, the Israeli people drew together briefly and pledged re-commitment to the peace process. But it was a shaky reconciliation to which the hard-core Likud only assented reluctantly and because it was politically impossible to do otherwise. Even then there were fundamentalists who openly applauded Yigal Amir. A year on, there is far more evidence of discord than of common endeavour in Israeli society. "How quickly the national memory dried up," wrote a commentator recently in the Yediot Aharonoth newspaper, "how fast the tears evaporated . . . A year after the assassination of the prime minister, and we have not yet learned to live with each other. We have not learned to talk to each other." A Jewish extremist pours scalding tea on a Knesset member who has gone to talk to a mixed meeting of Jewish and Palestinian women. Rightwingers object to the Song of Peace — which Rabin joined in singing minutes before he was gunned down — being used at a planned memorial meeting. There are a few brave efforts to bridge the gap of comprehension between the communities, but no one will admit even a hint of optimism.

Zevulun Hammer, education minister under Binyamin Netanyahu, claimed last week that the right wing was being unfairly blamed: "Bullets don't fly from only right to left." But within Israeli society the hatred and the violence has been one way — and it was often condoned by associates of Mr Netanyahu before Rabin was killed. It is true that the assassination did not create the schism; it only turned the spotlight upon it. It is also true (though it does not help) that the fundamentalist objection to the peace process is based not on anti-Arab prejudice but on profound conviction. This is the essence of the argument over Hebron today. To the Palestinians (and to Rabin's government which negotiated the Oslo agreement), Hebron was an Arab town with a small Jewish community; to religious Zionism, it was and is the City of the Patriarchs.

An Israeli prime minister can only begin to reconcile such deep divisions in society by leading it forwards, not backwards. Shimon Peres sought to do so after Rabin's death against increasing odds. In February he made his own task harder by consenting to the Israeli assassination in Gaza of the Hamas bomb-maker known as "the engineer". This then triggered the massive bombings against Israeli civilian targets which lost him the election.

Mr Netanyahu says he "sees things differently" from the Oslo agreement, yet he is not a fundamentalist but a pragmatist — with a strong opportunistic streak. The tragedy is that this has so far led him in the wrong direction. It was always going to be hard for Israeli society to face up to the implications of making peace with the Palestinians. For the logic (which Mr Peres accepted privately but could never say in public) does lead towards two separate states. When this is pointed out by outsiders — as President Chirac did on his recent visit to Israel — it causes enormous resentment. Yet a new, equal and co-operative relationship is the only real solution to Jewish-Arab hostility.

Mr Netanyahu and, it must be acknowledged, very large numbers of Israelis, reject a two-state solution altogether. But the last year has demonstrated that he and they have no other alternative except a gradual slide into the abyss (taking Mr Arafat with them). Contemplating this abyss could and should lead to second thoughts on entirely practical grounds. A rightwing leader is better placed than a prime minister of the left to change course. Mr Netanyahu might even find it easier than he expected; it is certainly the only way to bring to an end the endless circle of revenge — and defeat Rabin's assassin.

A mounting crisis in Central Africa

THE CRISIS in the Great Lakes area of Central Africa is now of huge proportions, both humanitarian and political. Hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees are fleeing from camps in eastern Zaire which they have occupied for two years or more. They are seeking to escape from fighting between the Zairean army and the Banyamulenge — a resistance movement of Zairean Tutsis. The Rwandan Tutsi government is accused by Zaire of sponsoring the Banyamulenge. But the trouble started several months ago when local Zairean officials, with encouragement from Hutu militia in the refugee camps, began to harass and deport the ethnic Tutsis — who have lived in Zaire for more than two centuries.

Any effort to assign responsibility or blame for the immediate situation soon becomes hopelessly bogged down in the web of a tangled past. But one thing is clear: this crisis is a direct descendant of the Rwandan disaster. Many of the Hutu "refugees" in the camps are former militia and soldiers who led the massacre of half a million Tutsis in Rwanda. Many are their family dependents who cannot be held guilty. The international community had little alternative but to treat them all as refugees. But as happens too often, once the aid agencies had got the immediate situation under control, so that the refugees were no longer dying in front of TV cameras on the road to Goma, the outside world lost interest. The new Rwandan government, which had driven out the Hutu killers, needed both practical support and diplomatic pressure to create the conditions where the refugees might be tempted back. There was precious little of either. Instead the ethnic division has hardened in exile. Rwanda claims that the camps have been used as bases for destabilisation. They have certainly been the source of anti-Tutsi sentiment within eastern Zaire itself, in collusion with the local army. This spring hundreds of Tutsis were killed in Masisi and Rutshiro, not far north of the camps near Goma. The violence forced about 65,000 people to flee into Rwanda. In October the governor and his deputy in South Kivu province began a similar campaign against the Banyamulenge who have lived in the area since the 18th century, while Zairean state radio accused United Nations aid workers of supporting the Tutsis against the regime. It is hardly surprising that the Banyamulenge see their only hope for self-preservation in armed resistance, or that some Rwandan army officers are giving them covert support. The balance of evidence suggests that groups of Banyamulenge fighters have received training and weapons in Rwanda. Their offensive now seems designed to push the Hutu refugees deeper into Zaire, and to provide the basis for a buffer zone which would suit Kigali's interests.

Any prediction of the outcome of this crisis is complicated further by the chaotic nature of Zairean domestic politics. Elections are due at the end of the agreed "transition period", which was supposed to see the shift from dictatorial to democratic rule, by July next year. President Mobutu remains in Switzerland after a serious operation: the feuding parties in the transitional parliament cannot agree which of its two vice-presidents should if necessary succeed him. Decades of brutal misrule in Zaire were condoned by Western powers for as long as Mr Mobutu provided a useful base for covert operations in southern Africa. The unfortunate Zairean people and the region as a whole now reap the consequences. Another destabilising factor is the desperate situation in Burundi with its related ethnic war between a Tutsi government and the Hutu majority — in which 150,000 people have died with far less publicity than Rwanda over the past three years.

It is easy to say what is needed: international diplomacy and mediation to stabilise the borders and promote political settlements in both Rwanda and Burundi. How to achieve it is another matter. Britain's UN ambassador has said "there are too many arms washing around in the hands of the combatants". Too true — so what will the Permanent Five (who are also the world's biggest arms dealers) do about it? An international conference of regional and foreign countries is mooted, with cautious provisos about the need for preparation. Any action has difficulties, but whatever is done requires a sense of urgency so far dismally lacking. It is not enough to shake heads at "tribal warfare". In this global age, those who drew the lines on the African map must tackle the consequences.

Austria seduced by the wiles of a Führer

John Naughton

PHILIP TOYNBEE once said that if a nuclear bomb were dropped on Twickenham during the Varsity match, then the prospects of fascism in this country would be set back by several generations. Much the same could be said for the audience at the New Year's Day concert in Vienna, when members of that city's bourgeois élite gather annually in baroque splendour to applaud Strauss family favourites. I can never look at them without thinking of their parents and grandparents doing exactly the same thing on January 1, 1939, 11 months after their country had been incorporated into the Third Reich. The only difference would have been that the best seats were occupied by thugs in the black uniforms of the SS.

If recent elections in Austria are anything to go by, it is only a matter of time before the Wiener burghers find themselves enthusiastically bowing and scraping to another gang of fascists, this time led by Jörg Haider, aged 46, the Führer of the so-called Freedom Party. Herr Haider's outfit polled 22.5 per cent of the national vote in the general election of October 1994 and last month did well enough in the European elections to pull in 27.6 per cent of the votes cast, thereby increasing the number of its MEPs from five to six. It is now running within two percentage points of the two main political parties that have governed Austria since the end of the war.

Unlike the previous Führer, Herr Haider has two testicles. We know this because he often struts about in the briefest of swimming trunks — a habit which serves to highlight not only his virility but also the shambolic condition of his opponents. He has a permanent suntan and action-man tastes: he likes nothing better, apparently, than a spot of rock climbing or white-water rafting, though he prefers it when there are photographers around to record this bare-knuckle athleticism. All of which makes a nice change from, say, Hermann Göring, who could only have ascended a rock face with the aid of a substantial crane. The portly Reichsmarshal would, however, have thoroughly approved of Herr Haider's background, for Papa was a Nazi SA veteran and Mama a stalwart of the League of German Maidens.

As a politician, Mr Haider is a gifted and ruthless opportunist. In the 1970s and 1980s, for example, he vociferously campaigned for Austria to join the European Union. Then in 1994 he did an abrupt U-turn and campaigned against membership in the referendum to decide whether Austria would join or not. The voters rejected his advice on that occasion, but are now becoming disillusioned with the EU as their government tightens the budgetary noose to ensure Austrian participation in European monetary union. And as their anti-European bile rises, Mr Haider is on hand to tap it.

All of which partly explains his recent electoral successes. But the real danger he poses comes from the fact that he is now tapping into a much richer and deeper well, namely the xenophobia that is never far from the surface of Austrian life. Traditionally, this found its expression in a virulent anti-Semitism that endured long into the post-war period. In 1991, for example, a Gallup poll found that 50 per cent of Austrians fully or partly agreed with the statement that the Jews bear blame for their own persecution through the ages, and 19 per cent agreed that it would be better for Austria not to have Jews in the country. This is the country, remember, which in the teeth of international protest about Kurt Waldheim's complicity in Nazi war crimes, elected him president.

There are only about 6,000 Jews in Austria now, compared with 190,000 before the Anschluss in 1938, so they can hardly be construed as a threat even by the most rabid anti-Semite. Nevertheless a third of Austrians, according to Gallup, would prefer not to have them for neighbours, which perhaps explains why there wasn't more of a fuss some years ago when Mr Haider spoke approvingly of the proper employment policy of the Nazis. An even greater percentage of his fellow citizens, however, have declared themselves opposed to living near eastern Europeans or Turks — a sentiment that Mr Haider and the Freedom Party tried to exploit by launching an Austria First petition in 1993 which sought, among other things, to limit to 30 per cent the proportion of pupils in any Austrian classroom whose native language was not German. Connoisseurs of these things will note that the criterion was not *proficiency* in German, but having it as a native tongue.

IN THE event, the Austria First campaign was defeated by the political establishment, but only at the cost of moving the country's residence and asylum laws significantly to the right. In the process, political discourse in Austria was significantly coarsened. Several prominent opponents of Austria First received letter bombs, one of which permanently maimed the Mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zilk.

Mr Haider's vigorous anti-immigrant stance legitimised the expression of sentiments which are normally repressed in civilised societies. He lost the battle, but he has been winning the war. He is the Austrian politician who is making the running, setting the agenda, driving the debate — and who will one day occupy the Federal Chancellery in Vienna.

The recent history of Europe suggests that fascism needs two ingredients to thrive: economic hardship, preferably affecting social groups who already feel marginalised; and xenophobia. The collapse of the Berlin Wall, and the resulting tide of economic refugees that is washing over Europe, has triggered the latter. The savage cuts in welfare budgets needed to ensure that countries qualify for EMU are taking care of the former.

What is significant about Austria is that it is the country where the two ingredients are present at exactly the right temperature. But other countries — notably Italy and France — are brewing up nicely. The price of monetary union may yet be paid in blood. — *The Observer*

Le Monde

France and Israel: bumpy ride of 50 years

Jean-Pierre Langellier

FOR almost half a century, relations between Israel and France have had their ups and downs. And for more than 20 years Jacques Chirac, in and out of office, has played a leading role in that tumultuous relationship.

The honeymoon of the fifties, which Israel remembers with great nostalgia, was succeeded by bitterness in 1967 and the next few years. There followed a series of angry exchanges between the two countries once Charles de Gaulle had gone, and, finally, catharsis in the form of François Mitterrand's visit to Jerusalem in March 1982.

The current French president is determined to put himself across as a model of loyalty and consistency after a period when Franco-Israeli relations were more often strained than harmonious. Equally, in his dealings with Israel's neighbours, he wants to be seen as the standard-bearer of a very Gaullist notion (France's so-called "Arab policy"), an economic presence and a cultural tradition.

Chirac is often taxed with inconsistency. But an examination of his public pronouncements on the Arab-Israeli conflict over the past 15 years reveals a real continuity. In December 1981, he described Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights as a "act of piracy", and since then he has repeatedly urged their return to Syria. For a long time he refused to visit Damascus because Syria did not allow members of its Jewish community to emigrate.

Chirac has long called for the Palestinians' right to self-determination, which over the years has become the right to an independent state. When he visited Israel in 1987 (he was the first French prime minister ever to do so), he argued that the keynote of relations between Paris and Jerusalem should be "demanding friendship" and "vigilant sympathy" — two notions that still hold true today, as the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, must have realised earlier this week.

The row sparked by De Gaulle in 1967 had serious long-term effects on relations between the two countries. In June of that year he slapped an embargo on exports of military equipment to countries involved in the Six-Day War, including Israel; and in November he formulated his notorious description of the Jews as "an élite people, self-assured and overbearing" — words the political commentator Raymond Aron said were worthy of Edouard Drumont (a theoretician of anti-Semitism) or Charles Maurras of the extreme right Action Française.

Jacques Chirac's visit takes an undiplomatic turn in Jerusalem's Old City last week, as he pushes away an Israeli bodyguard outside the Temple Mount PHOTOGRAPH: JIM HOLLANDER

To get some idea of the huge wave of disenchantment that swept Israel at the time, one has to remember the bond of mutual admiration and trust that had united De Gaulle and David Ben-Gurion. In 1960, the French leader told the founding father of the Jewish state: "In my view, you are the greatest statesman of this century."

"I flew towards the complicated East with simple ideas in mind" is how De Gaulle's memoirs famously describe his journey to the Middle East during the second world war. But the rest of that passage is often omitted. It goes on: "I knew that in a context of very intricate factors a vital game was being played out. We therefore had to be part of it."

Like De Gaulle, Chirac wants to be "part of it" in order to assert France's influence as strongly as possible, not only on its own behalf but also as an instrument of Europe's presence. That ambition forms part of an "Arab policy" which has shed its anti-Israeli trappings and is firmly in favour of the peace process.

The second legacy of the past with which Chirac has had to come to terms dates from the presidencies of De Gaulle's successors, Georges Pompidou and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing — a period marked by a string of hostile gestures, clumsy remarks and haughty silences.

A few months after meeting hostile Jewish demonstrators in Chicago in February 1970, Pompidou snapped at a journalist who asked him about the prospect of an improvement in Franco-Israeli relations: "The number you have just dialled is not in service at the moment."

France under Giscard, which was hard hit by the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, was hardly any friendlier to Israel: in 1974 it supported Yasser Arafat's admission to the UN as an observer and allowed a PLO bureau to be opened in Paris, and in 1977 it refused to extradite Abu Daud (the man responsible for the 1972 Munich massacre).

What particularly struck both Israelis and French Jews was Giscard's curious insensitivity to the joys, sorrows and symbols of the Jewish state. Giscard also remained curiously silent — to the considerable annoyance of the Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin — after Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977.

The third legacy Chirac has had to take into account is the achievement of Mitterrand's 14-year double presidential term. Hailed by Begin as "a true friend of Israel" on the day of his election in 1981, the new Socialist president was keen to clear the air between Paris and Jerusalem. When he assured the Knesset in March 1982 that Israel had a fundamental right to exist and to live in peace, Mitterrand poured balm on the wounds of the past. When he argued, just as forcefully, that the Palestinians were entitled to their own state "when the time comes", he ensured that mutual candour would henceforth be the rule between the two countries.

Israel was quick to criticise some of Mitterrand's initiatives in the Middle East, such as the rescue of Arafat from Lebanon on two occasions (in 1982 and 1983) and the PLO leader's visit to France in 1989.

During the period from the Madrid conference to the Oslo accords and the historic handshake in Washington in September 1993, France was sidelined. It is that process of marginalisation which Chirac wants to correct. His stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has the merit of being consistent and reflecting a broad consensus in France.

On a number of issues, such as a Palestinian state, the principle of "land for peace", the future of the Golan Heights, and of Jerusalem, that stance could not be further removed from Netanyahu's. France and Israel seem set to pursue their stormy relationship for some time to come. But that, surely, is better than indifference.

(October 24)

French oil firm accused on Burma rights

Frédéric Bobin

THE French oil company Total says it is "scandalised" by allegations made in a report published on October 23 by the French-based International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH). The report contains what it describes as "damning evidence" that human rights have been violated in the course of work on a colossal gas pipeline project in Burma. Total is the main company involved, along with the US corporation Unocal.

The 400km pipeline, which will run from the Gulf of Martaban across the region of south Tenasserim to the border with Thailand, is the biggest investment project to be carried out in Burma.

Total has regularly been criticised for the pipeline. It offers three lines of defence: the project does not in any way provide support for the Burmese ruling junta, since the gas deposits will not begin to generate revenues until 2001-02; the company has not used any forced labour on the site; and the project is of benefit to the local population because Total has been promoting small-scale development projects.

It is precisely that argument which the FIDH report sets out to refute. It contends that the pipeline project constitutes a form of "economic support" for the Burmese junta, which "is already profiting financially from the pipeline through loans secured on future revenues".

The report also claims the pipeline project has been responsible for blatant human rights violations by the regime. "Whether with the aim of assuring security" in a region subject to an endemic rebellion by certain ethnic minorities (the Karen and the Mon), or of "clearing the area with a view to building infrastructure necessary for the pipeline", Burmese troops have carried out "massive population transfers".

The report claims 30,000 people have been moved since 1991. On the issue of forced labour, while the FIDH accepts that Total has imposed a code of good behaviour on itself when hiring personnel, it denounces the army's forced recruitment of villagers for the purpose of carrying out tasks "directly connected with the pipeline site".

All this evidence leads the FIDH to conclude that "had it not been for the pipeline, all or some of those violations would not have taken place". In that respect, it says, Total is morally accountable.

(October 24)

Brundtland decides to step down

Benoît Peltier in Stockholm

THE Norwegian prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, took everyone by surprise when she announced her resignation on October 23. As her popularity had barely suffered at all from her 10 years in the job, she could easily have held out for another term as prime minister after the next general election, due in September 1997.

There had been rumours that the "mother of the nation" might step down before that election. She said at a press conference in spring that she would announce by the end of the year whether or not she intended to lead the Labour Party into the next election.

That remark fuelled speculation that Brundtland, aged 57, might quit the Norwegian political scene for some top international job, such as the post of United Nations secretary-general. She has not explicitly denied this possibility, but nor has she ever suggested in public that she was interested in succeeding Boutros Boutros-Ghali — always supposing she had a real chance of being accepted in New York.

Brundtland stated this week that "one can still do something important with one's life at my age". But she also hinted she might be content to hold a "simple job of deputy" in the Oslo parliament, and to have more time to write.

It is difficult to see how such an extraordinarily energetic and workaholic woman, who knows the ropes of pragmatic government, could possibly step down from the helm of a country whose economy is booming thanks to North Sea oil and gas.

Brundtland has given no clear answer to that question, apart from saying that she wanted to hand over to the next generation in the best possible circumstances. She will be succeeded as prime minister by Thorbjörn Jagland, aged 45, the leader of the Labour Party.

In the course of her three terms as prime minister since 1981, Brundtland has left her own very distinctive stamp on the country. She was also extraordinarily popular. This was most in evidence in the aftermath of the November 1994 referendum on whether or not Norway should join the European Union, which resulted in the Norwegians turning their back on Brussels for a second time.

But the Norwegians did not, for all that, give the thumbs down to their pro-European prime minister or regard her as having been discredited by such a spectacular personal defeat; she continued to ride high in the opinion polls. Despite that, she was deeply affected by the episode, which she regarded as her "main regret" in politics.

The high points of Brundtland's political career include her vigorous shake-up of the Labour Party, which resulted in its anti-Nato faction being silenced, and her commitment in favour of the environment as head of the UN commission that paved the way for the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of 1992. She was also a vigorous champion of women's rights.

(October 25)

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Haggling over the true worth of Vincent

Alain Franco and **Michel Guerrin** report on a controversy over the sale of a Van Gogh

ON DECEMBER 9 Vincent van Gough's Jardin à Auvers will come under the hammer of Paris auctioneer Jacques Tajan. The picture, which Van Gogh painted in July 1890, a few days before committing suicide, has always attracted controversy. Some experts describe it as "atypical", hinting that it may not be genuine, while others see it as "a masterpiece that heralds abstraction".

After changing hands many times, the painting hit the headlines in the eighties when its then owner, Jean-Jacques Walter, claimed he had been the victim of an attempt to "blackmail" several million francs out of him in return for being allowed to export the picture. He named two former culture ministers, Jack Lang and François Léotard. Lang described his claim as grotesque, while sources close to Léotard let it be known that he had "no recollection" of the episode.

More controversy arose in 1989, when the French government listed Jardin à Auvers as an historic monument, which meant it could not be exported from France. In 1992 Jean-Marc Vernes bought the painting from Walter for Fr55 million ($1 million) at an auction organised by Jean-Claude Binoche. Walter then sued the French government on the grounds that his picture would have fetched Fr200 million had it been allowed out of the country. In February this year, the government was ordered to pay Walter the difference.

Vernes, who died in April, had planned to donate the painting to the state in order that his heirs would have less inheritance tax to pay. But they decided otherwise, preferring to put the picture back on the market in December.

Another twist came with the July 10 issue of the satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné, which alleged that a journalist on the daily Le Figaro had carried out a lengthy investigation into Jardin à Auvers, that some experts doubted whether the painting was genuine, and that the paper had spiked the article because Vernes had bankrolled Le Figaro's owner, Robert Hersant.

The plot was thickening. If Jardin à Auvers was a fake, then the state — ie, the taxpayer — had paid Fr145 million for an "historic monument" that was nothing of the kind.



Van Gogh's Le Jardin de Daubigny (Avec Chat), done at the same time as the controversial Jardin à Auvers. Doubters say that it helps prove that the Auvers painting is a fake

"It really would be a joke if the picture turned out to be fake after all the efforts the French government had put into holding on to it," says Walter. "But I don't believe it is a fake."

That view is shared by many of the world's greatest Van Gogh experts who have had the opportunity to examine Jardin à Auvers, a small work measuring 64cm by 80cm. "There's no doubt that it's genuine," says Sjmar van Heugten, a curator at the Vincent van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Louis van Tilborgh, chief curator of the same museum, Ronald Pickvance, a leading authority on Van Gogh, experts at Sotheby's and Christie's, and Françoise Cachin, head of Musées de France, all agree with that verdict.

And then there is the J-B de La Faille's authoritative *catalogue raisonné*, L'Oeuvre de Vincent van Gogh, first published in 1928, which lists the painting. About 20 paintings were removed from the catalogue's 1970 edition because of doubts about their authenticity, but not Jardin à Auvers.

But whereas the catalogue to the Binoche auction says the first owner of the painting was Johanna van Gogh-Bonger, widow of the painter's brother Theo, the 1970 edition of the Bart de Lafaille catalogue states that it was first acquired by Amédée Schuffenecker, a collector of dubious reputation.

Not only did he trade in many fakes, but he was the brother of Claude-Emile Schuffenecker (1851-1934), who was a close friend of Paul Gauguin, knew Van Gogh, and was himself a collector. Like many of his fellow painters of the time, Claude-Emile turned out a number of pastiches, including one of Van Gogh's celebrated self-portrait showing him with part of his ear cut off.

During a bout of depression, he gave his brother Amédée his personal collection of paintings, which included pictures by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Monet and Renoir, along with a number of pastiches. Amédée is believed to have sold some of the pastiches from 1910 onwards in Berlin, passing them off as the real thing. But he was found out.

SCHUFFENECKER is not listed as one of the Van Gogh owners in the 1992 Binoche catalogue. Binoche says that Schuffenecker's name not being in the catalogue was probably the result of "an oversight", and claims to have copied out the Flammarion catalogue of Van Gogh's works. Some suspect the "oversight" may have been deliberate, since Schuffenecker's name, given his reputation, would not exactly have helped the sale. Others have gone one step further, claiming that Jardin à Auvers is in fact a Schuffenecker pastiche.

Another piece of evidence in favour of that theory is the notebook in which Theo listed his brother's works after his death, before they were taken from Auvers-sur-Oise to the Netherlands. It tells us that Van Gogh painted 67 pictures in the last three months of his life. None of them bears the title Jardin à Auvers. Van Tilborgh of the Vincent van Gogh Museum argues, however, that the list is "in no way a bible" and says that Van Gogh paintings were often given titles long after his death.

Doubters also point to the fact that Jardin à Auvers does not resemble other paintings done by Van Gogh during the last few months of his life, such as Le Jardin de Daubigny (Avec Chat) and Le Jardin de Daubigny. In Jardin à Auvers, there is no sky to be seen, and the flowerbed in the foreground is clearly pointillist in style.

Van Gogh applied three successive layers of paint to that part of the picture — first, a bluish background, then some yellow dots, and finally some blue dots. To prevent the three layers from merging, he would have had to wait for the first two to dry. To speed up the process, some painters use a drying agent; Van Gogh did not.

July 1890 was a wet month, so Van Gogh would have had to wait at least five days between layers. Some experts contend that such a slow process and painstaking technique does not square with his frame of mind at the time, when he was caught up in a creative frenzy and was painting virtually a picture a day.

Those who believe the painting to be genuine dismiss such theories. Tajan says: "Experts have compared the pointillist section of Jardin à Auvers with a similar section of another Van Gogh painting now in Japan. There's no doubt they are by the same hand and the same brush."

Walter points to the sheer quality of the painting. "When you look at Jardin à Auvers you receive such a shock that it's quite clear only a genius could have painted it — and Schuffenecker was not that genius."

The documentary evidence also points in favour of the painting being genuine. Van Tilborgh says: "The 1970 J-B de la Faille catalogue, which used to be regarded as the standard work of reference, indicates that Amédée Schuffenecker was its first owner. It is true that the Schuffenecker brothers are traditionally suspected of producing fakes. However, by charting the history of the Jardin à Auvers — which has always been incorrectly described — one can prove that this was not the case.

"It was not until the 1992 sale that Theo's widow, Johanna van Gogh-Bonger, was cited as the first owner of the painting. That totally contradicted the J-B de la Faille catalogue — and thus fuelled wild speculation.

"The facts are as follows: in 1905, a painting listed as Jardin Avec Fleurs in the catalogue of works Van Gogh painted in Arles went on show in Amsterdam. It came from the collection of Theo's widow. It was exhibited in various places during the following three years, notably at the Bernheim-Jeune art gallery in Paris in 1908. It was then sold to the Berlin art dealer Paul Cassirer, who later sold it back to Bernheim-Jeune.

"The painting was always associated with another picture, Jardin Près d'Une Maison. A German expert, Roland Dorn, after scouring the Bernheim-Jeune archives and matching up a 1908 photograph with the Bernheim-Jeune catalogue, has proved there was a mix-up over titles and catalogue numbers. It now turns out that Jardin Près d'Une Maison is the painting that dates from the Arles period, while Jardin Avec Fleurs is the picture we know today as Jardin à Auvers. There can be absolutely no doubt it comes from the Johanna van Gogh-Bonger collection."

The attitude of the French authorities at the December 9 auction will no doubt settle the matter. They are widely expected to make a pre-emptive bid to put an end to the controversy. The price is expected to be in the region of Fr50 million.

Tajan says: "What with the Fr145 million the government has already shelled out for nothing, that works out at about Fr200 million in all ... precisely what the painting is worth."

Flawed opera that returns to the source

Gérard Condé

LUIGI CHERUBINI'S Médée, which was first performed at the Théâtre Feydeau in 1797, is an opera that contains both dialogue and song. Until recently it was known only in a much later version by Franz Lachner (1855), who replaced the spoken dialogue with recitative song.

It was that version, translated into Italian and rejigged, which Maria Callas revived in the fifties. The result was something much closer to a prototype of Vincenzo Bellini's Norma than to Cherubini's original score, which Johannes Brahms had hailed as "the greatest work of dramatic theatre".

More recent productions have, fortunately, gone back to the original. The opera was performed in a concert version in 1985, and then given a stage production at last year's Valle d'Istria festival in Italy, a recording of which has just been issued (Nuova Era 72 53/54).

The aim of last week's production at the Festival de Compiègne, near Paris, which offered a more complete version of the spoken text, was to tackle the difficulties of the work head-on. The originality of Médée is that it contains spoken dialogue in the form of alexandrines, instead of the prose that was the rule in *opéra comique* at the turn of the 18th century.

Cherubini wrote the title role specially for the celebrated singer Julie-Angélique Scio, who was equally skilled at both tragic declamation and singing. Her partners were apparently less so, to judge from the reaction of critics and audiences alike. Nowadays it is even more difficult to come up with performers capable of excelling in both registers.

That is why Pierre Jourdan, director of Compiègne's Théâtre Français de la Musique, decided to muster two parallel casts of performers. His *mise-en-scène* was so deft he almost pulled off the illusion that there was only one cast: actors were discreetly replaced by singers, and vice versa, as they hovered near the wings, walked behind a column or plunged into the chorus.

The actors and their singing "doubles" did their very best to pitch their voices in the same register, but the emotional impact was weakened by the switching between two incarnations of the same character.

That said, the degree of osmosis achieved by actress Francine Bergé and singer Michèle Command in the title role was nothing short of remarkable. Bergé managed to tone down her dramatic temperament to suit the character of Command, whose Médée was bound to be poignantly seductive rather than violently passionate.

Inva Mula, with her flexible, well-rounded voice, was just the right singer to play Créon's daughter, Dirce. The gruff timbre of Jean-Phillippe Courtis's Créon was perfectly mirrored by the actor, Jacques Dacquemine.

The modest forces of the Ensemble Orchestral Harmonia Nova did not really have enough power to do justice to the overture. But from then on they rendered Cherubini's numerous dramatic effects and strikingly varied instrumentation with admirable intelligence.

Their conductor, Michel Swierczewski, had worked wonders with the score, and if the details sometimes seemed more interesting than the work as a whole, it was because that was how Cherubini wanted it.

The composer, whose imagination was clearly stimulated by the theatre, had a keen ear but lacked a breadth of vision. That shows to some extent in Médée, which contains both sublime passages and dull moments. The work is something of a freak, but a fascinating one.

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Atlanta Bomb Suspect Cleared

Pierre Thomas and Bill McAllister

THE U.S. Justice Department last weekend ended the nightmare of former security guard Richard Jewell — who went from hero to villain in the bombing at the Olympic Games in Atlanta last summer — by formally acknowledging that he is no longer a suspect in the terrorist incident that led to two deaths and injuries to 111 people.

"We are overjoyed," said Jewell's attorney, Jack Martin, citing a one-paragraph letter and two-page statement from U.S. Attorney Kent B. Alexander. "This is the government's way of saying, 'We don't believe you did it' and 'You're innocent.'"

A day after the early morning bombing at the Olympic Park on July 27, the portly former deputy sheriff was being hailed for spotting the green knapsack that contained a crude pipe bomb minutes before it exploded, notifying authorities and helping police move people away from the bomb.

Three days later law enforcement sources told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, then other news media that the contract security guard was the focus of the FBI's investigation.

Pleading that his life had become a nightmare, Jewell repeatedly expressed his innocence. But investigators declined to comment.

Finally, Jewell's lawyers orchestrated a public campaign to pressure prosecutors to issue a letter confirming that their client was no longer a suspect. Jewell went on CBS television's "60 Minutes" to proclaim his innocence, gave a six-hour interview to FBI agents and passed a polygraph test arranged by his lawyers. His mother held a tearful press conference pleading with President Clinton to order investigators to clear her son.

The Justice Department's action was not a surprise. As early as a month ago law enforcement sources acknowledged their investigation has been unable to develop any solid evidence against Jewell. Last week a federal judge, presiding over a request that the search warrant used against the guard be made public, declared that the Jewell was a "former suspect."

"We've got suspects, but there is nothing close," a senior law enforcement source said last weekend. Law enforcement sources have said some individuals associated with the militia movement have been under scrutiny in the case, but, three months after the bombing, there is not a prime suspect.

The initial reports that law enforcement authorities suspected Jewell were highly embarrassing to the FBI, Alexander said. He said in his statement that the revelation had "in fact interfered with the investigation." One law enforcement official said that it had forced investigators to concentrate on Jewell, who lived with his mother in Atlanta, early in the investigation although he was not the leading suspect.

Jewell "endured a highly unusual and intense publicity that was neither designed nor desired by the FBI," Alexander said in his statement. "The public should bear in mind that Richard Jewell has at no time been charged with any crime in connection with the bombing and that the property that was seized pursuant to court-authorized search warrants has been returned."

Separate Trials Ordered For Oklahoma Accused

Lois Romano

THE JUDGE in the Oklahoma City bombing case last week ordered separate trials for the two men accused of the crime, saying they would be unfairly prejudiced by a joint trial.

The ruling was a significant victory for the defense, which had argued in hearings last month that a jury would not be able to weigh the evidence separately against Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols if the men were tried together. The central issue was incriminating statements Nichols made to the FBI two days after the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in which 168 people were killed.

The government had strongly opposed severance, arguing that it would be costly to conduct two trials, and that it would be difficult to find a second, untainted jury. The government also clearly believed that their case against Nichols would be stronger if the men were tried together since Nichols was not in Oklahoma City on the day of the two-ton bomb exploded.

However, last week, Federal Prosecutor Larry Mackey said, "I honestly don't think the ruling will have much impact" on the outcome of the trials.

While prosecutors maintain that most of the evidence against the men is identical, only McVeigh has been directly linked to the Ryder truck that allegedly carried the bomb that destroyed the Murrah building. The case against Nichols will likely focus on phone records showing the men talked constantly in the days leading up to the explosion, as well as Nichols' statements to the FBI.

The decision by U.S. District Court Judge Richard P. Matsch turned on those statements, in which Nichols denied any involvement but told investigators he had picked up McVeigh in Oklahoma City a few days before the blast; that during the drive back to Kansas, McVeigh told him "something big" was going to happen; and that he had cleaned out a storage locker for McVeigh the day after the blast.

"If these statements ... are taken as true, they tend to incriminate Timothy McVeigh," Matsch wrote.

Matsch said that as a result of what Nichols told the FBI in nine hours of questioning "Timothy McVeigh will be profoundly prejudiced by a joint trial ..."

McVeigh lawyers had maintained that allowing the statements in a joint trial would violate McVeigh's rights since his attorneys would not be able to cross-examine Nichols unless he chose to take the stand in his own defense.

The judge agreed last week, writing that if tried jointly, McVeigh's lawyers "cannot question Terry Nichols or cross-examine the FBI agents on what they say Terry Nichols said."

Matsch also ruled that McVeigh be tried first, but did not set dates for the trials. Attorneys said they did not expect any trials before next year.

Both the government and defense lawyers expressed relief that the last major issue before trial had been put to rest. But relatives of the victims said they were disappointed that justice might be delayed.

"If this is what they call swift justice, I hate to see it when it's slow," said Kathleen Treanor, who lost her 4-year-old daughter and her in-laws in the blast. "I'm angry because it will take so much longer. But they acted of their own accord and they should tried on their individual actions."

A Jolt for Tutsis and Hutus

EDITORIAL

TERRIBLE THINGS are going on in Zaire. The ethnic wars between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi have spilled over into eastern Zaire, which holds refugees of both ethnic groups. At the same time, Zairians are playing out an old feud with long-established Tutsi immigrants. These tensions aggravate each other and threaten to spread armed conflict. They create what the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, terms a looming humanitarian catastrophe.

Burundi and Rwanda have become metaphors not only for a seemingly irremediable condition of African ethnic conflict, genocide and chaos but also for a condition of relative Western detachment. The United States leads in humanitarian relief for the affected peoples. But neither it nor the United Nations nor other friendly states have been able to muster an effective military intervention or much of a diplomatic or rebuilding initiative either. This has produced a strange combination of Western guilt at the feebleness of the international response and relief at avoiding being drawn into these African conflicts.

Uganda is cited as a model of comeback from deep disaster. Still, it is hard to think that Burundi and Rwanda will soon be up to taking the steps required to come back from their brink. That leaves the "humanitarian catastrophe" of which Mrs. Ogata warns to be addressed right now. Tens of thousands of women, children, sick and elderly are fleeing. The rising violence is forcing evacuation of relief workers.

The grimness of the prospect has induced immobility around the world. Could a major new political initiative break the spell? The United Nations has sent a special envoy to the region. This is the old style. Suppose President Clinton, President Chirac, U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, Mrs. Ogata, the heads of the World Bank and IMF invited the leaders of Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire in for a day's discussion. It could turn hand-wringing into the high-level political jolt the parties desperately need.

Date Conversion Could Cost $600 Billion

Rajiv Chandrasekaran

START WITH thousands of businesses and government agencies in the United States and abroad, factor in billions of lines of computer programming that must be checked for faulty date-related commands, add the limited time left, then look at the potential impact of errors and the scope of the problem of adjusting computers to the coming millennium becomes clear.

The Gartner Group, a consulting firm, estimates the price tag at $300 billion to $600 billion worldwide. For the federal government, which has a plethora of antiquated mainframe computer systems, it could range from $9 billion to $30 billion, say congressional and Clinton administration officials.

Although most personal computers won't be affected, institutions all over the world that rely on big mainframe systems could face breakdowns on the first day of the new millennium — as computers, with their rigid logic, conclude the year is 1900.

Pension payments might stop, because the machine, subtracting a date of birth from what it calculates to be the current year, concludes a 70-year-old woman is negative 30 years old and doesn't deserve a check.

Computers controlling missiles, confused over the date, might do — who knows what?

The cause? Two digits: 0 and 0.

Most large computers use two digits instead of four to represent years — to the computer, this year is "96" rather than "1996." Unless something's done, the "00" that will appear when the millennium arrives will be interpreted as 1900.

To save costly memory space in computers, programmers in the 1950s, '60s, and even '70s and '80s, abbreviated years into two digits and that was woven into billions of lines of programming instructions.

The fix-it job is complicated by the fact that many of the people who wrote the programs and understand them are retired or dead. Programming "languages" they used are often obsolescent ones that few people study any more. A new generation of programmers must tear apart hugely complex programs, figure out how they work, make fixes and hope for the best.

With 38 months left until the millennium, many computer analysts say time is running out. The Gartner Group estimates only about 17 percent of U.S. businesses have taken the imperative step of seeking outside assistance.

At congressional hearings this summer, Rep. Stephen Horn, R-California, gave 14 of 24 Cabinet departments and federal agencies grades of 'D' or 'F' on their year 2000 conversion plans. Some consultants predict 75 percent of states will not have made the necessary changes in the next three years.

"It's absolutely the largest management problem many of these organizations will encounter," said Barry C. Ingram, chief technology officer and vice president at Electronic Data Systems Corp., which provides computer services to businesses and government agencies.

"There is no magic bullet," said Peter T. Farkas Jr., systems engineering director at BDM International Inc., an information technology company performing year 2000 projects for government and private-sector clients. "Fixing this problem is a very involved process."

But the conversion effort can also be big business. "If you know what you're doing, there are millions of dollars to be made," said Mike DeVito, president of HCL James Martin Inc., which specializes in date-conversion projects.

Paying the Price for a Bankrupt Policy

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

DID Bill Clinton's need for quick cash influence his administration's decision to sell nine F-16 jet fighters to Indonesia's dictatorial regime? The honest answer to that question is yes; but not in the way Bob Dole would have you think.

Step back a moment from the campaign finance argument. Both parties have exploited loopholes and infringed campaign finance laws in this odious, cash-drenched election year. The Democrats seem to have been more odious, or perhaps less clever at subterfuge. But the Indonesian imbroglio tells us something that is ultimately more important.

That something is not about human rights. The Lippo Group and its agents did not need to make campaign contributions to have this administration bend its human rights policy on Indonesia.

This administration has no solid commitment to human rights, in East Timor or elsewhere. Its handling of China has proved that. So has its eagerness to sell arms abroad. As Kipling said of British journalists, there is no point in buying this administration on human rights when you see what it will do for free.

The driving force in this sale is the need of President Clinton — as opposed to Candidate Clinton — to unload those warplanes to Jakarta for about $200 million and replenish U.S. government coffers, not campaign coffers.

Clinton has no trouble raising campaign funds. It is the money he needs (or a President Dole would need) to run sound and effective foreign and defense policies that is scarce.

This is the larger scandal of the 1990s: Both Congress and the administration have created a penny-wise, pound-foolish approach to maintaining American leadership in the world. Instead of integrating resources and goals in a common vision of the national interest, the Democrats and Republicans who form official Washington pursue narrow, short-term political advantage in their spending decisions.

The administration's panicky responses to the Republicans' slash-and-burn attacks on spending abroad have added to the general incoherence of its *ad hoc* foreign policy.

The enormous imbalance between a defense budget that receives no true critical evaluation from either party and the emaciated, politically unpopular foreign affairs budget means that a president has few levers of power to pull abroad other than quick, casualty-free military intervention.

The F-16s that the administration plans to deliver to Indonesia beginning in 1997 were originally ordered and paid for by Pakistan in 1989. Delivery of the high-performance warplanes was halted when Pakistan's nuclear weapon development program became unmistakable.

Clinton publicly promised last year to return Pakistan's money. To his embarrassment, it proved politically difficult to squeeze the funds out of Congress. Instead, the Pentagon was told to find a new purchaser. The Indonesian deal would have sailed through uncontested had the Lippo scandal not surfaced and the Nobel Prize Committee not decided to award its 1996 Peace Prize to human rights activists in East Timor.

The Republicans are demanding an investigation. I'm for it. A public inquiry after the election might break the conspiracy of silence that both parties observe about the weakening of government and of American leadership abroad because of their misdirected budget priorities and fiscal timidity.

Neither Clinton nor Dole is being honest in the campaign on the costs of American leadership. In a speech he gave last week on expanding NATO into Central Europe, the president barely touched on what it will cost the United States, an issue that will dominate Senate hearings and headlines next year. Clinton avoided any estimates of the costs, which a recent Rand study says could run between $14 billion and $110 billion for the alliance over 10 years.

The costs of cost-cutting are already apparent in Iraq, where the administration's failure to come up with $2 million for cease-fire monitors contributed significantly to the eruption of civil war between the Kurds. Embarrassed by that fighting, the State Department is now belatedly trying to get the Kurds to agree to a new offer of cease-fire monitors. If the Kurds agree, the price is going to be much higher.

In any event, the administration has already spent 20 times the $2 million the peacekeeping proposal would have cost on ineffectual missile attacks on Iraq.

America cannot conduct an effective foreign policy on a misshaped shoestring. The administration and Congress that take office in January must honestly examine the current budget priorities and change those that make it impossible for the United States to exercise leadership except by bombing before breakfast (in Dole's colorful phrase) or by selling warplanes to one unsavory regime instead of another.

U.S. Holds Up Arms To Bosnia

Michael Dobbs

THE CLINTON administration last week said it would hold up a long-planned transfer of $100 million of arms to Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation until the Bosnian government removes a senior defense official who is reported to have close ties with Iran.

The American demand for the resignation of Bosnian Deputy Defense Minister Hasan Cengic came as a chartered ship with 45 M-60 battle tanks, 80 M-11 armored personnel carriers, and 15 UH-1h helicopters arrived at the Croatian port of Ploce. U.S. officials said the weapons would remain under U.S. control until the Bosnians agreed to several demands, the most important of which is the dismissal of Cengic.

The arms shipment forms a key part of the "equip-and-train" program announced last year by the United States that is designed to create a rough military balance between the forces of the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serbian entity, known as the Serb Republic. The program has been hamstrung by repeated delays, many of them caused by bickering between the Muslims and the Croats over the creation of an integrated federation army.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the equipment would only be transferred to storage sites when several "issues of concern to the United States are resolved on a satisfactory basis by the Bosnian government." A U.S. official later specified that the main U.S. demand was the resignation of Cengic, who was appointed deputy defense minister of the Federation last summer.

An Islamic cleric, Cengic is a longtime associate of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and was a co-defendent with Izetbegovic in his 1983 trial for fomenting Muslim nationalism in the former Yugoslavia. He has traveled frequently to Iran, and served as the go-between for the large-scale smuggling of Iranian weapons into Bosnia during the war.

In addition to Cengic's removal from office, Washington is also using the shipment of weapons to pressure the Muslims and Croats to speed up implementation of a defense law, which provides for the integration of their armed forces. The training of Bosnian soldiers began earlier this month by a team of 170 retired U.S. soldiers from Military Professional Resources Inc., based in Alexandria, Virginia.

In a separate move, the State Department last week called on neighboring Croatia to surrender a war-crimes suspect, Ivica Rajic, who was reportedly seen in a state-owned hotel in the Dalmatian port of Split. An arrest warrant has been issued for Rajic by the United Nations War Crimes tribunal in The Hague, on the grounds that he led the massacre of 16 Muslim civilians in 1993. The Croatian government has denied providing a safe haven to Rajic.

Police Shooting Sparks Race Riot in Florida Town

Michael A. Fletcher
In St. Petersburg

MANY RESIDENTS of this Gulf Coast city are proud of the racial progress made here since the days when black areas of town received few government services and African American celebrities were barred from the swank hotels that overlook glistening waterways.

But the sense of racial calm spawned by that progress was shattered by rioting that exploded here last week after a black motorist was shot dead by a white police officer. The disturbance left 11 people injured, 28 buildings and cars burned, and leaders here pondering the true dimensions of this city's racial progress.

"St. Petersburg was not known as a racially tense city," said Mayor David Fischer. "Something snapped on Thursday [last week], and we have to look at that. Racial relations have been pretty even. I wouldn't say they are considered bad."

In many ways, relations between the races are better than they once were. The police force is better integrated than ever, there are more black elected officials and the mayor says local government is spending far more in minority communities than before.

But those changes have made little difference to many residents of the largely poor, black southeast section of the city, where hundreds of people poured into the streets looting stores, throwing rocks at authorities and setting fires in an outburst of anger after the police shooting.

"It's obvious you've got a problem. People don't take to the street like that for nothing," said Fred Woods, 40, the owner of a small restaurant, who sat outside watching workers demolish the remains of a liquor store torched during the rioting.

The difficulty for city and community leaders is to find a solution to the complex and volatile mix of race, class and economic problems that are sure to prove more daunting than the racial barriers that once separated people in this city.

"If we are going to be successful in solving this, we have to get to the root of the problem," said Police Chief Darrel Stephens, who had been praised as an enlightened reformer before the recent violence.

Longtime residents say St. Petersburg's formerly all-white city government once was totally indifferent to the city's black residents. Trash collection in black neighborhoods was irregular, schools were inferior and the grievances of blacks were dismissed out of hand. A generation ago, when black professional baseball stars such as Lou Brock, Bob Gibson and Curt Flood came here for spring training, they were forced to stay with prominent black families because they were unwanted in the hotels that housed their white teammates.

Many of those problems have been addressed, in large part because of the city's tradition of quiet but persistent activism.

"St. Petersburg has always been a hub of activism," said Peggy Peterman, a retired columnist for the St. Petersburg Times. "We were always marching."

But while many of the old grievances carried a moral weight that ultimately could not be ignored, there is no consensus about what to do in the wake of the recent rioting. There have been calls for jobs and economic development in poor communities, but few plans to transform the calls into reality.



Police patrol the streets of St Petersburg during rioting prompted by the shooting of a black man — PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN BAER

Even in death, Tyron Lewis, 18, the motorist whose slaying touched off the disturbance, did not engender widespread sympathy. Lewis had a long arrest record that began when he was accused of shoplifting a bathing suit at age 9. He had been in and out of juvenile detention facilities for years and was wanted on drug and theft charges at the time of his arrest.

In an account disputed by some witnesses, police said he was shot after the car he was driving lunged at Police Officer James Knight, who along with his partner, had stopped Lewis and a companion for speeding. Federal, state and local officials are investigating the incident, which is the seventh police shooting here this year and the second in a week.

"This guy had a long list of prior arrests . . . His own brother called him a crack dealer," Mark Larsen, a popular radio talk show host, said in an interview that reflected the view of the vast majority of his callers. "The cops fired and took this . . . [guy] out . . . Should we be sympathetic to that? Should people riot for that?"

But to many who supported the rioters, Lewis's personal history was beside the point. For them, the issue was a police force that, while undeniably changing, for many seems to be as oppressive as ever.

"The community is totally fed up and appalled by the police aggression that has gone on here for too long," said Alverita Donaldson, who attended a meeting where residents loudly condemned what they called a pattern of police brutality.

High Rents Force Foreigners Into Shadows

Keith B. Richburg in Beijing

THE BRITISH woman calls herself Emma, but it is a pseudonym, because she is a fugitive from Chinese law.

In an interview, Emma described the constant fear of the late-night knock on the door from police, of sleeping in a dingy hotel room with three others and only two beds, of camping in the courtyard of a dormitory where the nearest toilet seemed like a mile-long march.

Emma's crime, so to speak, is being a foreigner in Beijing and refusing to live in one of the apartment buildings specifically designated for foreign residents. On her meager salary at a film distribution company, Emma says she can't afford the astronomical rates charged at the "foreigner" apartments — starting at about $2,500 a month but typically reaching $6,000. And since she is not a diplomat, she is not allowed to live in the cheaper, subsidized diplomatic compound. So Emma has joined the growing legion of Beijing's homeless foreign migrants.

"It's very difficult," she said, describing how she has been forced to move eight times in the last two years. "You never know where you're going to be living in six months."

She's occupied so many cockroach-infested apartments that she counts herself as something of an expert on the pests: "I think they have a death wish on me because I've killed so many of them."

Some foreigners get by for months, even years, living in low-rent apartments designated for Chinese. This is particularly true of Japanese or Koreans, who can more easily blend in and who find landlords wanting their hard currency.

But Westerners like Emma are conspicuous — to police, to nosy neighbors and to people's committee watchdogs on the lookout for illegal residents.

Apartments for Chinese typically rent for as little as $100, although shady landlords usually charge foreigners more under a dual pricing system.

Since Beijing suffers from an acute housing shortage, Chinese residents have apartments assigned to them, based on their "work unit." But with the new affluence here, many residents with assigned housing invest in spare private apartments, which they rent out for extra income.

Foreigners are not the only ones who complain about the capital's housing shortage. Increasing numbers of Chinese professionals now work in the rapidly expanding private sector, including foreign companies, and since these Chinese have no official "work units" they are not entitled to subsidized housing.

The private apartments are at Hong Kong-level rents, so young professionals often can only afford to live in private housing they consider substandard.

"The facilities are terrible," said one young Chinese woman who works as a public relations officer for a multinational firm. "I have no bathroom, no shower and almost no furniture. There's no telephone. It's just like a dormitory room — only much simpler."

Many Chinese officials seem to stereotype all foreigners as rich — so they see no problem with regulations requiring them to live only in designated apartments, even if the rents charged would make Tokyo residents cringe.

Those foreigners caught in the housing crunch often came to China as students and stayed on to teach, get jobs as journalists, start their own businesses or work for small companies on local terms — meaning that housing is not included as a fringe benefit.

"My company can't afford to put me in legal, foreign housing," said Raymond Blanchard, an American consultant who has lived here for a year and was just evicted from his low-rent flat near Beijing's Ritan Park. "They're shooting themselves in the foot. We're the ones bringing in the money."

"For people who just graduated or are looking for a job, it's really difficult," said a young European woman who asked not to be otherwise identified. She described the night police came to search the compound where she was living with her Chinese boyfriend in a Chinese-only apartment. She escaped by jumping over a fence and spending the night in a hotel lobby.

"It's really a problem — where do you go?" she said. The cheapest foreigner's apartment she could find rented for about $1,000 a month and was far from her job near the city center. "No way I could afford it," she said.

Other foreign residents said they have been awakened by police after midnight in raids lasting until dawn. In some cases, police teams knocking on doors looking for "illegals" have brought along video cameras to film the offenders, then forced them to go to the station house to register, prove they are not living in China illegally, and sign a confession.

Blanchard said he discovered he had been evicted after coming home late and finding his apartment door sealed with a new deadbolt lock. When he was told he could not enter even to collect his belongings, he angrily kicked in the door and gathered his bags and a pet cat. "It's pretty harsh," he said. "If I didn't have a girlfriend to stay with, I would have had to stay in a hotel — and I can't afford to stay in a hotel for very long."

An Australian woman was forced out of her apartment when armed police banged on her door at 11:30 one night, as she was in bed reading. She found refuge at the apartment of a sympathetic journalist.

Some here said an elaborate scam may be at work. In many cases, a shady landlord will allow foreigners to move in if they pay a hefty deposit, often six months rent in advance. Then, after the money is paid, the police come and order the foreigner to move out — and when the evicted foreigner tries to get his money back, he is told that the apartment has changed owners. Since the lease was illegal in the first place, the evicted foreigner cannot report the loss.

The Times They Were A-Changin'

Jonathan Yardley

THE LAWS OF OUR FATHERS
By Scott Turow
Farrar Straus Giroux. 534pp. $26.95

THERE ARE two things to be said about The Laws Of Our Fathers. The first is that in this, his fourth novel, Scott Turow has done something admirable and courageous: He has broken what, in a recent "Writing Life" essay for Book World, he called the "ban of silence" that has prevented white writers from treating black characters and black life in fiction. The second, alas, is that the book itself does not live up to its author's bravery; though marked by Turow's characteristic intelligence and seriousness, it is a flabby, talky enterprise the reading of which entails more labor than pleasure.

Though the principal action of The Laws Of Our Fathers takes place in 1995 and 1996, it is really a novel about the 1960s. That decade, Turow said has "always been my obsession"; the 1960s were "a shaping period, in some ways as consequential as World War II and the Depression had been to our parents." In this he is quite right; the effects of that decade, most but not all of them highly lamentable, are to be found everywhere in American life and presumably will continue to be until Kingdom Come.

The novel is constructed around the drive-by murder of a white woman in her sixties on a street in a public housing project of Kindle County, Turow's fictionalized Chicago. This happens in early September of 1995. Within a week the case has been turned over to Judge Sonia "Sonny" Klonsky, which as much as anything else reminds us that we are dealing here with pure fiction: Since when has "the right to a speedy and public trial" been honored so swiftly in the overcrowded courtrooms of any major American city?

Sonny Klonsky will be remembered by readers of Turow's fine second novel, The Burden Of Proof, wherein she was in practice with the novel's protagonist, Sandy Stern. Now she is 47 years old, "one of a half dozen lawyers of established integrity recruited to the state court bench by a Reform Commission created in the wake of the latest bribery scandal."

As soon as the case begins to unfold, we are presented with a set of circumstances so improbable as to test the credulity of even the most gullible reader. The trial is virtually a reunion of a small band of people who had known each other intimately in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Northern California, "figures from [the] past [who] have reappeared with everyone written into new roles, as bizarrely misplaced as the characters in a dream."

The murdered woman, June Eddgar, is the former wife of Loyall Eddgar, a charismatic and possibly lunatic leftist who now represents Kindle County in the State Senate. The defendant is their son, Nile, for whom the aforementioned Seth Weissman had baby-sat in those bygone glory years. Weissman now is in the press box; he writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column under the nom de plume Michael Frain. His former lover, Sonny Klonsky, is presiding over the case, and his best friend, Hobie Tuttle, is counsel for the defense.

"The Big Chill Meets Perry Mason," Seth says with a laugh when he contemplates the ingredients on hand, but unfortunately "The Big Chill Meets Perry Mason" is exactly what Turow has written: half '60s soap opera, half courtroom melodrama. The book works on neither count. The maunderings of the '60s alumni are tiresome and inconsequential, and the courtroom scenes offer little to hold one's attention. Turow has made a mighty effort to address serious matters within a believable fictional setting, but he simply has failed to do so.

"Having had such high hopes for the world," Sonny Klonsky wonders, "are we the unhappiest adult generation yet?" Though Turow means us to see how his characters are coping with the changes in their world, it is this whiny sense of lost entitlement that permeates the book. Like Sonny, almost everyone else in the novel looks back to the '60s with longing and views the present with a sense of betrayal. It occurs to many of them to blame "the laws of our fathers," but to no one to blame themselves.

"Almost everyone else" does not include the black residents of the Grace Street Projects, where the murder takes place and where various witnesses at the trial and other participants in the story reside; they have no reason to look back sentimentally upon the 1960s.

Turow has captured the despair and hopelessness of their lives with real feeling. His use of ghetto street dialect is extensive and presumably accurate. It seems reasonable to assume, though, that sooner or later Turow is going to catch hell for his presumption in writing about these people and using their language, or his own version thereof. That will be a pity if it comes to pass, but I would rush more eagerly to his defense had he done this courageous thing in a better novel.



ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

Voice of His People

Michael Eric Dyson

NO FREE RIDE: From the Mean Streets To the Mainstream
By Kweisi Mfume
with Ron Stodghill II.
One World/Ballantine Books.
373pp. $25

KWEISE MFUME is an individual we can, and should, admire. His life story as told in No Free Ride is in many ways a classically American one: A soul seemingly destined for failure — born poor, living on the wrong side of town, in a family with no education — interrupts his fate by rallying against misfortune and then lands on top of a world that might well have crushed him.

Mfume was born Frizzell Gray in 1948. Dubbed "Pee Wee" by an aunt for his diminutive stature, he spent the first 12 years of his life in Turner's Station, "an all-black, blue-collar town perched quietly on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay."

From the start, however, there was trouble. Mfume's father terrorized the household: He withheld affection from Kweisi and his three sisters and beat their mother, Mary. But eventually in 1959, he left.

But Mary's hopes for her only son would be greatly delayed by his enthusiastic embrace of the survival ethic of the tough ghetto streets of West Baltimore, where the family moved when he was 12. When Mfume was 16, Mary died of cancer in her son's arms. The trauma of her death spurred a downward spiral in Mfume's life that would take the better part of a decade to reverse. "My world on its best day was a mixture of scheming, gaming, hustling, and brawling. I was going nowhere fast and chasing after things that would never last." By the time he was 22, he had fathered five sons out of wedlock.

By telling the story of his erratic early life, of course, Mfume is aware, and reminds us as well, of the political utility of memory — of how the past always has a future. It's clear that he's viewing the past, and his own painful pilgrimage, through the lens of his present commitment — as newly elected president of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) — to the poor and the racially oppressed. Thus, Mfume's narrative of personal transformation — of defeating the forces that are out to defeat him — becomes a blueprint for racial reconstruction.

In this light, the parts of Mfume's memoir that detail his transformation — his choice of a Ghanaian name to signify his intellectual and spiritual rebirth, his return to school for a GED and then a college degree, his student activism and work as a disc jockey, his membership in the Baltimore City Council and the U.S. Congress, where he almost single-handedly revived the Congressional Black Caucus, and his new position with the NAACP — are about still another fusion: of the American myth of individual self-reinvention, and the African-American myth of racial uplift.

"What was it that caused me to rise so high from ashes so deep?" he asks. And looking upon the faces of young gang members loitering on a street corner, he muses: "These kids are not beyond rescue or redemption any more than they are beyond hope or help."

As She Lay Dying

Howard Frank Mosher

FAREWELL, I'M BOUND TO LEAVE YOU
By Fred Chappell
Picador. 228pp. $21

ON A stormy night in the remote hill country of western North Carolina, the aged storyteller and matriarch Annie Barbara Sorrells lies dying. She is attended by her loving daughter, Cora; Cora's husband, Joe Robert Kirkman; and their son, Jess. "If we lose your grandmother," Joe Robert tells Jess at the height of the tempest, "a world dies with her."

It's true, and what a rich world it is, as remembered by Jess Kirkman and recorded by novelist and poet Fred Chappell in his powerful and entertaining new novel. In Farewell, I'm Bound To Leave You, Chappell has created an entire self-contained universe of isolated hollows and tiny farm hamlets, inhabited by mountain people like Annie Barbara, whose like won't be seen again, in the American South or anywhere else. Above all, this is a place whose natives are linked by love: love of nature, of community, of music and tradition and vividly idiomatic language and, most important, of one another.

To begin with, there's the abiding love of Annie Barbara for her near and extended family. In the early chapter "The Shooting Woman," Annie recounts to Jess the wonderful and hilarious saga of her part in his parents' courtship. Years ago, when Cora Sorrells set her cap for the free-spirited Joe Robert, Annie instructed her daughter how to win Joe's heart — with the aid of a scarlet silk petticoat, a 12-gauge shotgun, and a wedding-night unveiling like none (and this I'll guarantee) you've ever heard of before.

Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You is structured as a collection of linked family stories, in the tradition of such novels as Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club and Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine. Courtship is a recurrent theme throughout the novel. Chappell uses his enormous fund of Southern folklore and humor with great skill in such stories as "The Shining Woman," in which Little Mary Talbot, neglected and unrequited in her loveless marriage, returns from the grave to claim the attention due her from her hard-bitten husband; and "The Feistiest Woman," whose two-fisted heroine, Ginger Summerell, packs a revolver. When Ginger's fiance begins to panic over the idea of marriage and commitment, she actually challenges him to a duel with his choice of pistol, rifle, revolver, or knife, to defend her honor.

SEVERAL of my favorite stories in the novel explore love in the form of friendship — a refreshing and rather unusual theme in contemporary fiction. "The Fisherwoman" celebrates an unlikely angling partnership between a fatherless young girl and a misanthropic old fly-caster with a temperament "as barbed as blackberries and as gnarly as willow roots."

"The Silent Woman" chronicles the mysterious and enduring affection between two women of utterly opposing personalities: stately Selena Mellon, who never utters "so much as a lonesome syllable," and wild, redheaded Lexie Courland, in "her flaming forties," who if she likes the looks of a man is "after him like a chicken hawk on a hatchling."

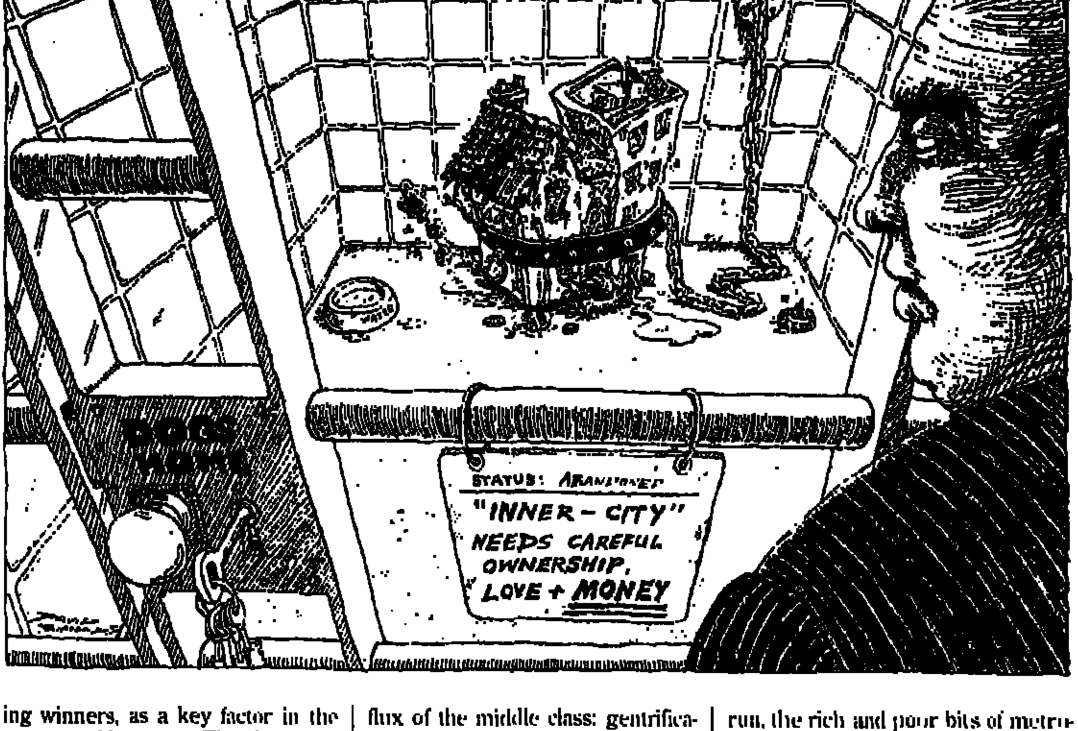
At the same time, Chappell doesn't romanticize his special place and its people. Often enough, in the Carolina hill country of Annie Barbara Sorrell's youth, "horses and cows and sheep got better doctoring than people did" and better treatment as well.

There isn't a speck of sentimentality in Chappell's stories; and we're never allowed to forget that the love that binds his characters together is constantly threatened by violence, in a region where, until well into this century, women caught out in the woods alone were routinely "bigged" — raped and made pregnant by mountainmen who then, in accordance with this barbaric custom, possessed their victims for life.

"It is passionate affection or sorrow that makes most of us poets," Cora Sorrells Kirkman tells young Jess in "The Wind Woman," a marvelous evocation of a mother's love for her son. What elevates these stories from folklore to literature is the author's passionate affection for his characters, combined with his sorrow over their passing. From the legacy of their lives, Fred Chappell has created the most affecting work of fiction about place and love that I have read since A River Runs Through It.

Taking the metropolitan line on urban decay

The rejuvenation of inner city areas is not only socially and economically desirable, it is the only the way forward, argues **Richard Thomas**



ONCE, cities were synonymous with achievement, progress and enlightenment. Today, cities — or more particularly those areas cursed with the prefix "inner" — conjure up pictures of stressed-out infrastructures, poverty, instability, congestion, riots, dirt and despair. Stir in some US-inspired "underclass" ideology and the modern urban brew seems noxious indeed.

What went wrong? Why are cities sliced into areas of extreme deprivation? At first sight, the answer seems to be contained in one word: de-industrialisation. As the concentrations of industrial capital, which fuelled the 19th century urbanisation of the West, dried up in the face of foreign competition, manufacturing jobs disappeared. The steelworks, textile firms, dockyards and shipbuilders gave up the ghost, and the flight from city to suburb began in earnest. Liverpool's population almost halved in the 30 years after 1961.

But the decline of the inner city was not inevitable, even in the face of massive economic restructuring. What sealed the fate of the urban core was not de-industrialisation itself, but its impact on the political and class landscape. Decoupling industry from the city split the working class in two.

The proud, skilled working class packed their bags and sought out new jobs in light industry on greenfield sites or service-sector firms in the suburbs or new towns. Government policies encouraged this. Families were enticed out to new towns with grants, or to the London suburbs with 100 per cent mortgages.

Ensconced in their new suburban and commuter-town homes, the upwardly-mobile working class were insulated from the trials of their former neighbours — the unskilled and the new wave of immigrants, left behind in sink council estates. It is hard to care for poor when they are 10 stops down the Tube line.

Essex Man was born, and he voted Tory. The historian Eric Hobsbawm has pinpointed the post-war "crumbling of the labour block", between inner-city losers and departing winners, as a key factor in the success of Margaret Thatcher, who built a new coalition between the middle class and the aspirant working class. This alliance was the death warrant of the central cities. Suddenly there were no votes in cities, with their shrinking constituencies and miserable turnouts. So long as they had the suburbs, market towns and villages, the Conservatives didn't need the central city.

Now, though, there are signs of hope. The populations of central city areas have stabilised and, in some cases, begun to rise again. New engines of capital accumulation — international finance houses, consultancies — have arrived in town. Dockland areas are being spruced up and inward investment is pouring in.

These are welcome developments, and for all the residents: to say that they do nothing to help the poor, as many leftwing critics do, is patronising. Poor people like clean buildings and fine art galleries, too. But they should not replace more aggressive social and economic policies. "Aesthetics are in danger of replacing ethics in urban policy," warns David Harvey, professor of geography at Johns Hopkins University, in his new book*.

Most importantly, hopes of a genuine political commitment to the urban cause have risen with the influx of the middle class: gentrification is well established. Loft living is trendy. But, to judge from the statements of the main political parties, the reurbanisation of the vanguards of Middle England has so far failed to reawaken real concern for the inner city.

There are three reasons for this. First, there are no political institutions through which Britain's urban middle class can offer help to the urban poor. Local councils are too constrained, and cover too small an area, national government is too remote, the Greater London Council and its equivalents are defunct.

Second, even though the bourgeoisie are in the cities, they generally occupy different fragments from the poor. They do not drink in the same pubs. "They seal themselves off from the rest of the city," says Professor Harvey.

But most important of all, 17 years of Tory rule have resulted in an almost universal acceptance of the restorative powers of the market and conservative views on the "moral" roots of poverty and crime.

In as much as there is any political imperative to "do something" about Britain's urban wastelands, it is expressed in demands for heavier policing, strategies of containment.

This is a short-sighted approach. Research by David Rusk in the United States shows that in the long run, the rich and poor bits of metropolitan areas stand or fall together. He contrasts US cities where the inner and outer rings have been part of the same political region — "elastic cities" — allowing for redistribution and strategic economic policy, and metropolitan areas divided into separate entities.

In "elastic" metros, such as Minnesota and Connecticut, overall economic growth between 1949 and 1989 was 40 per cent faster than in such "inelastic areas" as Baltimore or Chicago. In the central cities, the rate of growth was twice as great.

Mr Rusk says this is because poverty is ultimately more expensive than poverty prevention, and because competitive strategies based on metro-wide networks and partnership are more likely to succeed in the global economy than a "city versus suburbs" competition. Managing a deepening urban divide with deepening rows of police on the frontiers is not a sustainable strategy.

But the real reason for "doing something about the inner cities" is neither because it is economic nor because it will reduce crime — although it will probably do both — but simply because it is right.

*Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference is published by Blackwell at £12.99

In Brief

THE Government could be forced to repay $310 million after losing the latest battle over Valued Added Tax, when the European Court of Justice ruled that Customs & Excise was wrong to charge it on the full price of goods sold at a discount.

SAINSBURY ratcheted up the UK supermarket wars when it unveiled plans to become a fully fledged bank. In partnership with the Bank of Scotland, the retailer has applied to the Bank of England for a full banking licence.

CHARGES levied on airlines by the British Airports Authority for the use of Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted must be cut by $232.5 million over the next five years, the Civil Aviation Authority announced.

CABLE & WIRELESS has pledged to slash the cost of UK phone charges and provide on-line viewers with everything from Internet access to the latest movies as it unveiled a $9.3 billion plan to merge with three rival cable television companies.

NATIONAL SAVINGS has been accused of bureaucratic bungling after the National Audit Office uncovered serious weaknesses in the body's accounting system. The UK government's savings organisation, which safeguards investments worth $15.5 billion, is increasingly vulnerable to fraud and errors, for which taxpayers might have to pay, the NAO said.

VOLKSWAGEN, whose chief executive, Ferdinand Piech, has been summoned to answer industrial espionage charges in the US, unveiled net profits of $296 million for the first nine months of the year, some 40 per cent more than it made in the whole of 1995.

A NEBRASKA-BASED generating company, Cal Energy, has launched a hostile $1.2 billion bid for Northern Electric, which could leave a third of England's power supply firms in American hands.

Rich cargo for a wheeler-dealer

Jon Henley in Helsinki

FOR SALE: 400 tonnes of deep-frozen chicken legs, plus 20 tonnes of chicken frankfurters. Also available: 11,000 pairs of Indonesian plastic shoes, 44,000 packets of finest Ceylon tea and 20 tonnes of Ecuadorian instant coffee. Special offer: 133,000 Indian girls' blouses.

It may not be your average product line, but this is not your average company. In a novel spin-off from the boom in Western exports to post-communist Russia, Reima Tuomikoski, a wheeler-dealing Finnish entrepreneur, has cornered a lucrative and entirely new market — in the stuff that never gets there.

"It's beginning to get out of hand," Mr Tuomikoski said last week. "Finland says it's the gateway to Russia, but we're actually its warehouse. I've sold two or three hundred container loads in the last couple of years, and 20 or 30 new ones get stuck here every week."

According to Finnish customs, 1,200 containers are stranded in Finnish ports at any one time because their Russian importers cannot or will not pay the freight charges. After a year, Customs can auction them to pay the shipping company's bill — but not if Mr Tuomikoski gets there first.

"What usually happens is the Russian pays the manufacturer up front for the goods," he said. "Because the shipping companies know Russian businessmen by now, they bring the stuff here and wait for the freight bill to be paid. In the meantime, of course, the Russian tries to sell the goods to someone else, fails and forgets the whole thing. I look for a new buyer, and pay off the shipping company."

The difference between the freight bill and the sale price — minus a few expenses — is Mr Tuomikoski's profit, about which he is exceptionally coy. He will reveal that he sold "distressed goods" worth some $25 million last year.

Because the goods are not cleared for sale in Finland or the European Union, he finds new buyers from all over Russia, Estonia or Latvia. Sometimes he finds someone who will take it for free and pockets a substantial fee from the shipping company, which otherwise would have to get it safely, and expensively, destroyed.

Occasionally, deals fall through. The Stroh brewery of Michigan and shipping line OOCL are themselves deciding the fate of 5 million bottles of beer stranded in Kotka port.

Often he uncovers money laundering. "Two containers came in last year with fully-paid invoices for nearly $1 million," he said. "They turned out to contain two clapped-out compressors worth $3,000, and neither the US exporter or the Russian buyer existed. I guess some mafia boss wanted cash to go shopping in Beverly Hills."

As one of the few to benefit from the cavalier antics of Russia's new businessmen, Mr Tuomikoski reckons he'll be coining it in for some time to come. "Those Russians," he said happily, "so many roubles, and so little sense."

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates October 28	Sterling rates October 21
Australia	2.0245-2.0264	1.9937-1.9962
Austria	17.23-17.25	17.17-17.19
Belgium	50.41-50.50	50.29-50.36
Canada	2.1660-2.1681	2.1433-2.1455
Denmark	9.39-9.40	9.34-9.35
France	8.27-8.27	8.25-8.25
Germany	2.4495-2.4521	2.4419-2.4446
Hong Kong	12.40-12.40	12.29-12.30
Ireland	0.9909-0.9927	0.9919-0.9938
Italy	2,451-2,455	2,437-2,440
Japan	184.06-184.29	179.19-179.42
Netherlands	2.7476-2.7508	2.7397-2.7422
New Zealand	2.2840-2.2871	2.2285-2.2314
Norway	10.34-10.35	10.34-10.35
Portugal	247.24-247.55	246.07-246.38
Spain	206.27-206.45	205.41-205.62
Sweden	10.59-10.61	10.51-10.53
Switzerland	2.0303-2.0330	2.0099-2.0123
USA	1.6116-1.6126	1.5900-1.5910
ECU	1.2773-1.2788	1.2705-1.2720

FTSE 100 Share Index down 47.8 at 4025.8. FTSE 250 Index down 6.3 at 4443.1. Gold up $1.75 at $388.00.

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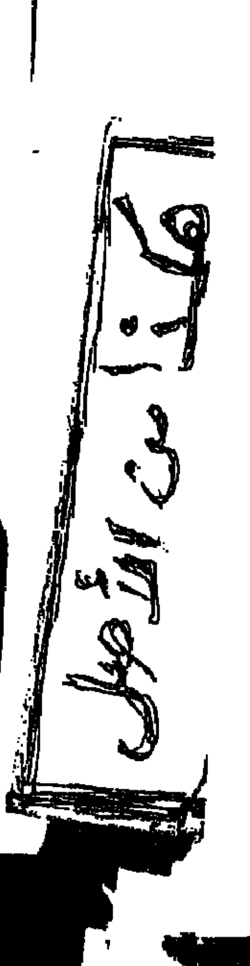
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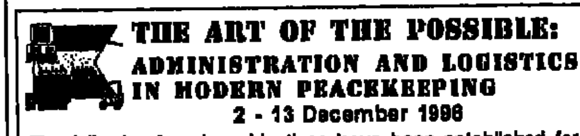
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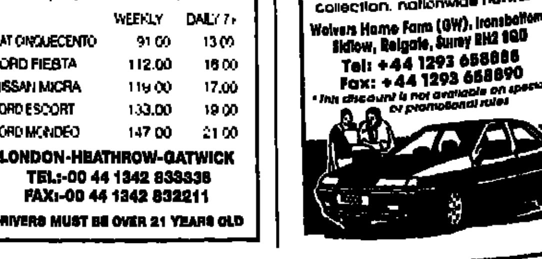
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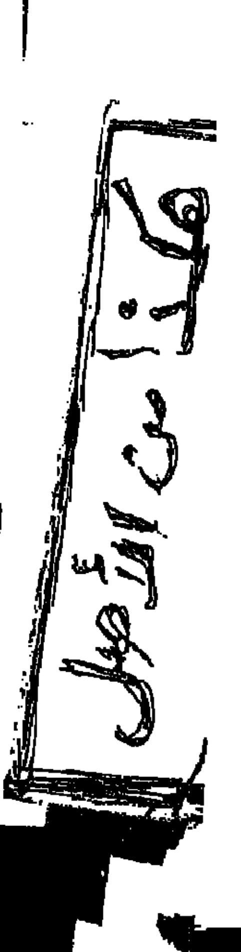
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History's terrible timing

What if the Hungarian uprising and Suez had not happened together, asks **Matthew Engel**

SOMETIMES it just rains history. This may be a matter of simple, eerie coincidence. The writers Aldous Huxley and CS Lewis died within hours of each other on November 22, 1963, but the obituarists hardly noticed: it was the day President Kennedy was assassinated. On the night of October 15, 1964, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Nikita Khrushchev — men with little in common — both fell from power, the day before China exploded its first atom bomb.

Forty years ago this week, two great dramas of the post-war era came to a crisis — Suez, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. History is usually considered in straight lines. But reality is more messy. It was especially messy as October turned to November in 1956. The question that has never been answered (and rarely posed) is to what extent the timing of these events affected their outcome. It is possible to hypothesise that if there had been no war in the Middle East, the next 33 years of Communist rule in eastern Europe would have been very different.

Many events were crammed into one fortnight. On October 23, 1956, the Hungarians, encouraged by anti-Soviet unrest in Poland, rose in revolt. Young people attacked tanks with their bare hands. By October 26, the reformer Imre Nagy was in power and promising democratisation. There was no immediate Soviet response. On October 29, a leader in the Times proclaimed: "The Hungarian people are winning. They have broken the gates of their prison . . . armed with little but their despair and courage and unity, [they] have wrought a change that will transform far more than Hungary."



Khrushchev . . . 'could not take defeats in Egypt and Hungary'

But that night the Israelis launched their assault on the Suez Canal, recently nationalised by President Nasser. It seems likely that two items of news reached Moscow on the afternoon of October 30: Nagy's decision to abolish the one-party system, and the ultimatum of the British prime minister, Sir Anthony Eden, to the warring parties in the Middle East — effectively an ultimatum to Nasser, since Britain and France were colluding with Israel.

On October 31, Britain and France began bombing Egyptian airfields. By that time the Soviet Praesidium appears to have decided that the Hungarians would have to be crushed. Before dawn on November 4, 15 Soviet armoured divisions, equipped with 6,000 tanks, took control of the country. Nagy's last despairing message ended: "I hereby inform the people of Hungary and world opinion of the situation." World opinion was somewhat distracted.

There now seems to be a historical inevitability about the invasion of Hungary. We assume that the Russians would never voluntarily allow one of their subject nations its freedom but it did not seem that way in 1956. It was not only the Times and the Hungarians who were deceived: the CIA director, Allen Dulles, said there had been "a miracle".

Stalin had been dead for more than three years, and the tyranny that had reached its peak in the early 1950s had been mitigated. Nagy had come to power in Hungary in 1953 and embarked on what was known as the New Course: an emphasis on consumer goods rather than heavy industry, a partial reversal of collectivisation, and a downgrading of everything Russian. Nagy had been ousted in 1955 and his liberalisation checked. But the response of the Hungarians was a classic example of the way revolutionary pots are more likely to boil over when their lids have been loosened a little.

In February 1956, Khrushchev, as Soviet leader, had denounced Stalin. In April, he had visited Britain with the premier, Nikolai Bulganin, preaching mutual co-existence. The B and K Show had been the media event of the year: Khrushchev had reportedly said that if he were British, he would vote Tory. Thousands of Stalin's prisoners were released or, if that was too late, posthumously rehabilitated.

Post-Stalinism was not yet in the straitjacket it would wear for the next three decades. If Nagy had not overplayed his hand by declaring withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, he might have got away with it. And what if the West had been able to concentrate?

There was another complication. President Eisenhower was dealing with the little matter that sends US policy into narcolepsy every fourth November: he was up for re-election on November 6. Indeed, much of the Washington officials' fury about Britain's behaviour seems to have been generated by their belief that it had complicated the president's most urgent concern. It now seems extraordinary that a US president could effectively repudiate Israel, as Eisenhower did, days before an election. But in 1956, the Jewish vote was so overwhelmingly Democratic that it was hardly a factor in the Republicans' calculations.

Public opinion was looking elsewhere. There was a huge protest in Trafalgar Square, but this was against the Suez action, not Hungary. It is hard to believe that in normal times opinion would not have reacted far more forcefully against the Soviet Union.

But the western alliance was riven. And it was hardly in a position to exert any moral authority against the Communists. The Soviet Union was accusing Britain of barbarism. Bulganin cabled Eden: "We are filled with determination to use force to crush the aggressors." "Oblivious of Hungary," Eden wrote sadly in his memoirs, "the Russians felt they could snarl with the pack."

And so they could. There was a substantial body of thought in the world that the real danger to world peace came from Britain's reversion to imperialist bossiness, rather than from Nasser or Khrushchev. So the west had no chance to exert any kind of moral authority.

This argument formed part of the Commons attack on Eden by Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell. If Suez had tilted the balance towards Russian intervention in Hungary, he considered the Government's action inexcusable: "If in any way Britain had destroyed the most hopeful, encouraging and heart-raising events since 1945 they were profoundly guilty."

Sir William Hayter, Britain's ambassador in Moscow, thought the Soviet leadership was hopelessly split between the strong-armers and liberals. He suspected Khrushchev might originally have wanted to hold off in Hungary to strengthen Soviet moral authority over Suez.

But Nasser was a Soviet ally. And Moscow could do nothing to help him without a precipitating a world war. "The Soviet government could not do much for Egypt," Hayter wrote later, "and could not take two simultaneous defeats, Egypt and Hungary."

WE NOW have a few fragments of first-hand information to guide us further. Notes made at the time by a Kremlin apparatchik, V N Malin, are quoted by Timothy Garton Ash in the latest New York Review of Books. "If we depart from Hungary," Khrushchev supposedly said, "it will give a great boost to the Americans, English and French — the imperialists. They will perceive it as weakness on our part and will go on to the offensive . . . To Egypt they will then add Hungary."

The world did avoid a complete catastrophe in the week that ranks with the Cuba crisis of 1962 as the most dangerous in post-war history. And whatever the rights and wrongs of Britain's intervention at Suez, it is unlikely that the past 40 years in the Middle East would have gone very differently. By November 8, Britain and France were backing down. But could an alternative scenario have saved eastern Europe from 33 of the last 40 years under tyranny? The answer is a definite maybe.

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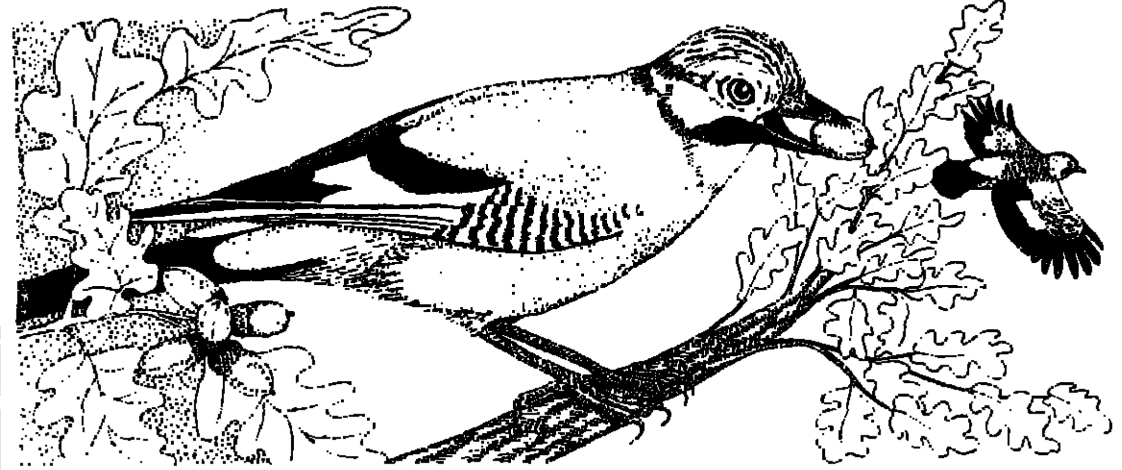


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBOAY

Tall oaks from busy jays grow

Mark Cocker

THROUGHOUT history the common name for one of the most widespread members of the crow family has had curiously mixed associations. For the English subjects of Henry VIII, for example, the word "jay" was a pejorative term meaning either a simpleton or a person in gaudy costume. Even in modern usage we retain something of these negative connotations when we talk of the thoughtless pedestrian "jay-walking".

In the classical period, however, they knew better. The citizens of Athens and Rome were sensitive to the birds' beauty and were accustomed to keep them as pets (jay is, in fact, a corruption of the Latin praenomen, Gaius, which is retained more completely in the modern French name, *Geai des chênes*). They were equally aware of the jays' capacity to master Greek and Roman pronunciation, and regularly taught birds to speak. As early as Aristotle's time they were apparently familiar with the behaviour that most indicated the jays' intelligence — the habit of storing food for the winter.

Over the past month, all across the northern hemisphere, from Japan westwards to the Pacific coast of North America, jays and their close relatives have been busy caching thousands of tonnes of food. In fact, it is this brief but intense burst of activity that converts a normally shy bird into a highly visible element of the autumn landscape. At present in Norfolk, jays seem to be everywhere, flying between belts of oak with their curiously bounding, almost butterfly-like action, or hopping beneath the trees, scalding us with their harsh calls that account for one of many old country names, the devil-scritch.

All this intense activity is devoted to a single crop — acorns. The birds store them in a specially distensible pouch beneath the tongue and then fly to a spot where the ground is soft enough for the acorns to be buried. Carrying as many as nine acorns, a bird will travel more than 4km to find exactly the right sort of storage area. Studies reveal that an individual bird makes up to 60 of these journeys a day, and during the autumn months stores away about 5,000 acorns. This is an impressive figure, but it is the total number planted by all Europe's jays that I find even more exciting. Working from known western European populations, excluding Italy and the Iberian peninsula, I calculate that jays are burying in the region of 20 billion acorns a year.

They compound this feat of economic prudence with a gift for memorising exactly where they have left their harvest, sometimes digging through 40cm of snow to retrieve it. However, they never remember all their stores and it has also been shown that a high proportion of oaks derive from nuts planted by jays. Moreover, during the burying process birds favour open areas where they can keep a sharp lookout for predators — a location all the more beneficial for the surviving saplings.

Different members of the crow family have parallel relationships with other trees. In northern Russia, for example, nutcrackers do much the same with the seeds of arolla and Siberian stone pines. In North America the pinyon jay has a symbiotic relationship with the pinyon pine, while Clark's nutcrackers have a mutual dependence on a range of pine species.

It always strikes me as deeply sad that an aspect of the jays' behaviour far better known is their predation of the eggs and young of songbirds. But next time you're upset by the jays' slaughter of these helpless nestlings, or irritated by their painfully loud, screeching call, remember: a good deal of the world's temperate forests are planted by them.

Bridge Zia Mahmood

I'M OFTEN asked what my favourite contract to play is. Of course, it's wonderful as well as profitable to bring home a grand slam. But games and part scores are very often more difficult to play than grand slams. And since I play bridge for the intellectual challenge, I'd say that my favourite contract is one that struggles home after I've given it my best shot against a tough defence.

Like this one. Benito Garozzo was my lefthand opponent, the Omar Sharif World Individual Championship was the occasion. This was my problem as South after a simple auction:

♠ A K 6 4 3
♥ J 8 4
♦ A Q J
♣ A 5

♠ Q 9
♥ K 6 5
♦ 10 9 7 5 4
♣ Q J 10

West	North	East	South
Garozzo			Zia
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Benito led the ten of hearts, which went to the four, three and king. It looked easy enough — I had a heart trick in the bank, four diamonds after knocking out the king, at least three spades and at least one club. Of course, if the opponents could cash enough hearts to beat me after I gave up the king of diamonds, then I would go down — but there wasn't anything I could do about that. So I played a diamond to the jack at the second trick. It held. What now?

I could cross back to the queen of spades and repeat the diamond finesse — but if that lost because East had cleverly ducked on the first round, I would have no entry to my diamond winners. Perhaps I should play the ace and queen of diamonds, trusting to a 4-3 heart break should the king of diamonds not fall under the ace. Yes, that looked good.

But suppose that Benito had begun with four diamonds to the king as West? Now, if I played ace and queen of diamonds he would duck, and I would be an entry short to establish my diamonds. I would have to rely on a 3-3 spade break, and I wanted better odds than two to one against.

Suddenly I saw it. The perfect play! I led the queen of diamonds from the table without cashing the ace. If the queen of diamonds lost, I had nine tricks as before. But if it was allowed to win, then I could establish the spade suit by giving up a trick there — I would make four spades, a heart, three diamonds and a club. The play looked unnatural, almost grotesque — but it wasn't. It was the reason I play this game.

This was the full deal:

North: ♠ A K 6 4 3 ♥ J 8 4 ♦ A Q J ♣ A 5

West: ♠ 7 5 ♥ Q 10 9 7 ♦ K 6 3 2 ♣ 9 4 2

East: ♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ 8 ♣ K 8 7 6 3

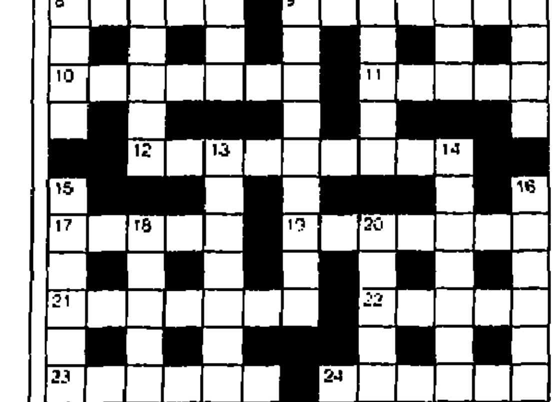
South: ♠ Q 9 ♥ K 6 5 ♦ 10 9 7 5 4 ♣ Q J 10

The cards lay as I had feared — West had four diamonds to the king, and the spades did not break 3-3. But there was nothing the defenders could do, as you'll see if you take the time to analyse the play.

I don't think that any other hand has given me quite as much pleasure as this one. So I guess you'd say that three no trumps was my favourite contract. But I imagine that was the answer you were expecting anyway!

Zia Mahmood's paperback original, Ask Zia: Your Top 50 Bridge Questions Answered, is published by Metro Books at £5.99

Quick crossword no. 338



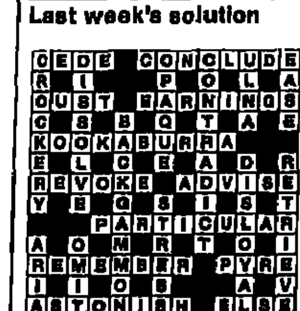
Across

1 Discussion (6)
4 Floating aimlessly (6)
8 Grown-up (5)
9 Error (7)
10 Beat decisively (7)
11 Expert (5)
12 Official record keeper (9)
17 Fire-raising (5)
19 Hermit (7)
21 Flower (7)
22 Fragrance (5)
23 Gaudy (6)
24 Time — to add salt and pepper? (6)

Down

1 Scarcity (6)
2 Woman's bedroom (7)
3 Giant (5)
5 Hopelessness (7)
6 Likeness (5)
7 Agreement (6)
9 Whirlpool (9)
13 Beginning — of the Bible? (7)
14 Strident (7)
15 Talkative person — airship (6)
16 Stay (6)
18 Animal trail (5)
20 Pursue (5)

Last week's solution



Chess Leonard Barden

NIGEL SHORT and Michael Adams, ranked number 9 and 10 in the world, have developed a strange affinity in their results. There's no obvious reason for such a link, since although both have a fine understanding of strategy, there are also big differences in approach: Short has won many good games against the Caro-Kann 1 e4 c6, which is Adams's favourite defence.

But both scraped through against weaker opponents in the PCA world title quarter-finals in New York 1994; were in good form for England at the 1994 Moscow Olympiad; were crushed in the PCA semis by Anand and Kamsky; and recovered during 1995-96, simultaneously reaching their all-time rating peak when they were juxtaposed in Fide's July 1996 world list.

Perhaps it's not surprising that when the out-of-form Short made a run of draws at last month's Yerevan Olympiad, so did Adams; and when Michael managed two wins in a row near the end, so did Nigel.

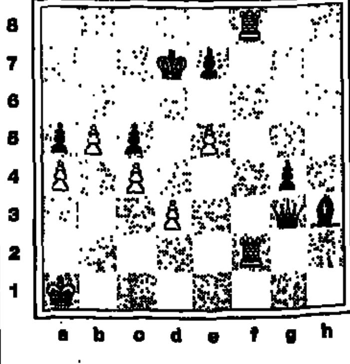
Just coincidence? I don't think so. It is psychologically hard for GMs who have been near the peak of world chess — a title match for Short, a semi-final for Adams — to maintain a consistent level of work and effort when there is no major goal ahead. So they are a foil for one another, and the even balance is reflected in the split of invitations between them at the élite all-play-alls which top GMs enjoy so much.

This unusual stalemate or dynamic balance looks set to end soon with the rise of Matthew Sadler. The Olympiad gold medallist, aged 22, is two years Adams's junior, nine years younger than Short. His Fide rating performance at Yerevan was more than 2750 points and his current overall rating is over 2650, only some 30-40 points behind them. How the creative and sporting tension of a trio rather than a duo in contention for places in the declining number of top tournaments affects each player remains to be seen.

Short v Yudashin

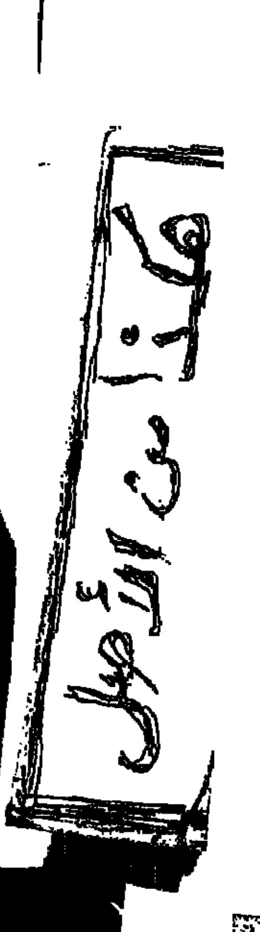
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 Nf3 e6 5 Be2 Ne7 6 0-0 Bg6 7 c3 Nd7 8 Nh4 c5 9 Nd2 Rc8 10 Nxg6 hxg6 11 Nf3 Qb6 12 Rb1 a6 13 b4 cxd4 14 cxd4 Nf5 15 g4 Nh4 16 Nxh4 Rxh4 17 b5 a5 18 Be3 f5 19 Rc1 Rb8 20 Bg5 Rh7 21 gxf5 exf5 22 Bf3 Be7 23 Qd2 Bxg5 24 Qxg5 Rh6 25 Qf4 Rd8 26 Bxd5 Nf8 27 Rc5 Nd7 28 Rc2 Nf8 29 Rc5 Nd7 30 Rc4 Qxb5 31 Bg8 Rh8 32 Qg5! Rxg8 33 Qxg6+ Ke7 34 Qd6+ Ke8 35 Qe6+ Kf8 36 Rfc1 Qb6 37 Qxf5+ Ke7 38 d5 Qh6 39 d6+ Ke8 40 e6 Nf6 41 Rc8 Qh5 42 Rxd8+ Kxd8 43 e7+ Ke8 44 Rc8+ Resigns.

No 2445



White mates in three moves, against any defence. Many solvers have been defeated by this fine old problem.

No 2444: 1 Ne3. If Kxd2 2 Bb2 Ke1 3 Bc3. If b2 2 Rd1. If Kb1 2 Rd1+ Ka2 3 Ra1.



New look fits Old Bill

***PC PLOD* and his old Prussian helmet will soon be on the last patrol, *writes David Rose*. Police uniforms for the next millennium will mark the most dramatic change in the appearance of British bobbies since their foundation by Sir Robert Peel in 1828.**

Robocop it is not, but the new kit incorporates the latest technology. "Magic T-shirts", worn next to the skin, will stop a bullet or a knife. The new round helmet, in polystyrene and plastic, will have a built-in radio microphone and will resist the force of a baseball bat.

For women officers an old embarrassment will be ended at last: villains will no longer be able to see through their shirts, and for the first time they will wear trousers on patrol.

The new look should be seen throughout Britain in 1998. The biggest breakthrough is the "covert protective vest", capable of withstanding a knife attack or bullet fired from a .357mm pistol. It replaces cumbersome and detested designs which can only be worn outside clothing. It will be light, flexible and almost unnoticeable under a shirt.

There will be fleece blousons like those worn by mountaineers and tough weatherproof jackets. Since radios will be concealed within the helmet and clothing, the only items to be worn on the new utility belts will be handcuffs and a baton.

The old helmet, modelled on a Prussian army style, has been worn since 1863. It is a powerful icon of the police in England — though not in Scotland, where it was abandoned in 1935. But it has some nasty tricks. It falls off when an officer breaks into a run and fails British standards of impact absorption: officers are at serious risk of fractured skulls from assaults.

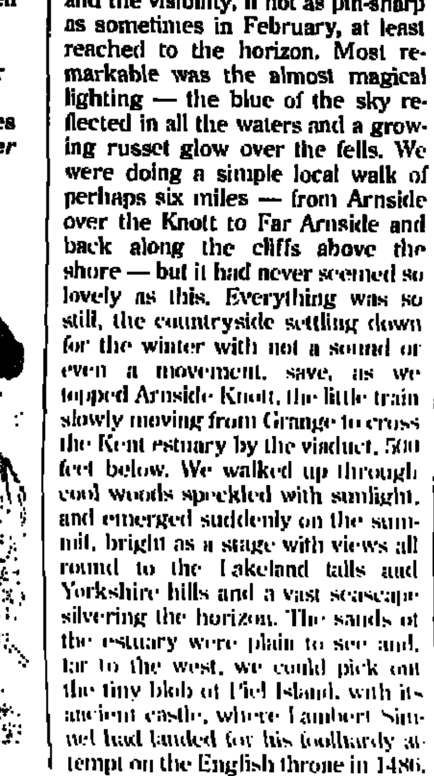
Police have no affection for the old-fashioned tunic, which has changed only marginally since the beginning of the century. In the past 10 years, some forces have introduced Nato-style pullovers, but these, too, have their faults: they are not waterproof and swiftly lose their smartness and shape.

The traditional helmet and uniform will be maintained for ceremonial areas, such as Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament. — *The Observer*

From PC Plod to PC Mod via the laughing policeman, to the Victorian copper of 1870, into the 1950s and now on to a new millennium

A Country Diary

A Harry Griffin



THE LAKE DISTRICT: It was probably the best day of the autumn — even of the whole year. The sun smiled down from dawn to dusk and the visibility, if not as pin-sharp as sometimes in February, at least reached to the horizon. Most remarkable was the almost magical lighting — the blue of the sky reflected in all the waters and a growing russet glow over the fells. We were doing a simple local walk of perhaps six miles — from Arnside over the Knott to Far Arnside and back along the cliffs above the shore — but it had never seemed so lovely as this. Everything was so still, the countryside settling down for the winter with not a sound or even a movement, save, as we topped Arnside Knott, the little train slowly moving from Grange to cross the Kent estuary by the viaduct, 500 feet below. We walked up through cool woods speckled with sunlight, and emerged suddenly on the summit, bright as a stage with views all round to the Lakeland falls and Yorkshire hills and a vast seascape silvering the horizon. The sands of the estuary were plain to see and, far to the west, we could pick out the tiny blob of Piel Island, with its ancient castle, where Lambert Simnel had landed for his foolhardy attempt on the English throne in 1486.

Letter from Châtaigneraie Peter Graham

Medical nomads turn native

IT IS often said that the French are a nation of hypochondriacs. That may be unfair, but they are certainly obsessed with matters medical: there is a plethora of health programmes on radio and television, and magazines like Bien-Etre Et Santé and Santé-Magazine are read by millions.

The French also consume more tranquillisers than any other nation on earth. This they can do partly because of a health system that allows you to consult as many doctors as you wish, scooping up fresh supplies of tranquillisers each time. This phenomenon, known as "medical nomadism", is partly responsible for France's yawning national health deficit — the state refunds most or all of the cost of consultations and prescribed drugs.

The medical culture in this very rural part of the lower Massif Central is somewhat atypical. First, there is not much opportunity for "nomadism", as doctors get suspicious if someone from a distant village comes to them hinting they need tranquillisers. But where the inhabitants of the Châtaigneraie and some other rural areas differ from the norm is in their widespread recourse to alternative medicine.

A good number of people in my village, whatever their age-group, swear by homoeopathy, acupuncture and/or branded herbal medicines. And when it comes to minor ailments, they often call on the services of unofficial bonesetters, chiropractors and "healers" of all kinds. Some such practitioners work on a semi-professional basis, but in most cases their activities are no more than a sideline.

The local "chiropractor", for example, is a station-master. His strong hands often work wonders for people suffering from trapped nerves or sprains (which may be caused by anything from tossing too heavy a bale of hay on to a wain, to being shoved in the ankle by the snout of a 250kg pig). But he has been known to make his patient's condition worse — at least according to the local doctor.

A farmer in my village is reportedly able to cure a benign but unsightly skin infection caused by the trichophyton fungus: he takes a lock of the sufferer's hair, and then, in isolation, makes the sign of the cross and recites a prayer (the text of which he can reveal only to the person to whom he wishes to pass on his "gift", just as he will have usually received it from someone else).

PEOPLE suffering from plantar warts consult a woman in the next village. She passes her hand over the sole of the patient's foot until he or she feels a burning sensation. A few days later the wart withers away and drops off. The local doctor claims she may in fact pinch the wart, which would have the same effect.

A gendarme who used to be stationed in the next village had the power to soothe the excruciating initial pain of burns and scalds by "transferring" it from his patients to himself. He was so successful as a "fire-charmer" that the doctor, to whom he would subsequently refer them for normal burns treatment, became intrigued. He wondered if the gendarme could pass on his "gift" to him. The gendarme promised to do so, but subsequently left the force — to became a baker — without ever contacting him again.

This widespread recourse to something that resembles black magic is ascribed by the doctor to the mystical attitude many people here have to the riddle of healing: "They prefer not to know too much about the scientific side of medicine — this is possibly a hangover from the time when they had to rely on healers because of the shortage of trained physicians in this remote area."

The village priest believes that most reports of cures by healers are exaggerated and that the crucifixes, signs of the cross and prayers — he prefers the word "incantations" — used by them are pure mumbo-jumbo.

He recalls with amusement how his predecessor in the job — an oddball priest who kept a fierce alsatian dog and installed a sophisticated burglar alarm in the church (where there is nothing of value to be stolen) — claimed to be able to cure all sorts of serious ailments, from heart trouble to osteoporosis, with bee-stings.

He must have enjoyed some success, since people kept on coming to him. But one local, after a session during which he was given 20 bee jabs in the thigh, went home, vomited and collapsed. When his wife phoned the priest in a panic, he retorted "Have you never seen anyone who has been taken ill?" and forbade her to call a proper doctor (which might have got him into hot water).

The patient survived, but the priest's reputation took a plunge. He had never been much liked by parishioners, because of his habit of launching *ad hominem* diatribes from the pulpit and berating people in the confessional. He once admitted that had he not felt the calling of the church he would have gone into the gendarmerie.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHO invented the zip fastener, and when?

THE FAST slide fastener was patented by Whitcomb L Judson of Chicago in 1893. This consisted of a series of hooks and eyes that fastened together with a slider. The more modern type of zip, using a meshed tooth arrangement, was patented by Gideon Sundback in 1913. Zip fasteners were first used in men's trousers and did not appear in women's clothing until the 1920s. — *Nick Spokes, Ilford, Essex*

THE zip didn't take off until 1918 when the US navy realised that it would make an excellent fastener for flying suits. The name zipper was coined in 1926, and has since been shortened to zip in the UK. — *Nicola Baxter, Redland, Bristol*

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "back to square one"?

THERE were many board games, popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with numbered squares similar to Snakes & Ladders, where a player landing on a square carrying a penalty might have to go "back to square one" — and this is clearly the origin of the phrase.

Despite Brewer's Dictionary Of Phrase And Fable and other books such as the Dictionary Of Modern Phrase, the phrase has no connection with radio commentaries on football matches.

Growing up in the 1930s, I regularly listened to such broadcasts while following the movement of the ball on a football-pitch chart in the Radio Times which was divided into eight squares. Captain H B T Wakelam gave the commentary while Charles Lapworth would murmur "Square 3" . . . "Square 5" . . . as the ball moved about the field. Wakelam never mentioned the squares, and Lapworth said nothing else. The phrase "back to square one" was never used.

On the 50th anniversary of broadcast commentaries in 1973, an article in the Radio Times credited the phrase to these commentaries, but one has only to look at the diagram to see the phrase could have no relevance: "back" to one team would be "forward" to the other; the restart after a goal was never in square one; and a pass-back to goal could also be "back to square two", "square seven" or "square eight". — *Norman Brindley, Caddington, Bedfordshire*

Any answers?

THE universe has evolved from simple beginnings. In the process, it has presumably been obeying certain fundamental laws of physics. But were these laws there from the beginning or have they too evolved? — *Gordon Simpson, Hastings, East Sussex*

ALLEGRO, Astra, Capri, Cortina, Fiesta, Maxi, Mondeo, Samba, Viva. What is the marketing theory which dictates that virtually every British post-war volume production car has to have a name ending with a vowel? — *N Jones, Hereford*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Readers with access to the Internet can respond to Notes & Queries via http://go2.guardian.co.uk/nq/

Incredibly hip hop . . . Lauryn Hill of the Fugees is no mere foil to the male vocals PHOTO: MARTIN GODWIN

Sound of New Jersey scores big in Brixton

HOW big is "big"? In the Fugees' case, big enough that Sony had to stop making their number-one single, Killing Me Softly, because it wouldn't get out of the charts over the summer to make way for the next single, *writes Caroline Sullivan*. That in turn went straight to the top, helping the band's current album, The Score, sell 9 million copies since its release in March.

It's the more remarkable for the fact that, save for one-offs like the Coolio single, hip-hop acts simply don't sell in those quantities. But then the Fugees aren't your typical hip-hoppers.

The trio, who hail from the deceptively lyrical-sounding East Orange, New Jersey, employ sensual female vocals as much as they do rapping, and the voice's owner, the fashion-modelish Lauryn Hill, is no mere foil for the two male Fugees. This in a genre where women must usually go solo to achieve any recognition. Even more relevantly, the Fugees make the diametrical opposite of gangsta rap. Despite dedicating their Brixton Academy show to Tupac Shakur and issuing half-hearted calls for insurrection, the Fugees are positivists who believe civilisation isn't yet in irreparable decline. Until it is, they're going to party — and the audience is coming with them, dammit.

Their show takes to task the belief that rap is boring live. It's as if they've never heard of the two-slobs-barking-into-mikes formula. Hill, Wyclef Jean and Pras Michel are on a mission to entertain, and if that means stopping the show to sing Happy Birthday, or Pras wading into the crowd to berate some unfortunate who didn't have the "right vibe", so be it. They even put a Fugee spin on the moment when the house was divided and each half told to shout in turn: Hill split us into "all the ladies with real hair" and those without (and it was hard to tell who were more numerous).

The Fugees made much of their eclecticism, constantly dipping, with the aid of a drummer and bassist, into other people's songs, from Walk On The Wild Side to the Jackson 5's ABC.

Even Killing Me Softly did not escape their irreverence, but the dazzlingly-perfumed girl fans crooned along anyway, eyes closed to conjure up memories of Spanish waiters on summer holidays. This was as the Fugees would have wished; as Wyclef said before an explosion of tinsel signalled the finale, "It ain't about black and white." Nope, it's about music, love and real hair.

Lord of the dance

Modest Jonathan Cope is the ideal prince of ballet, says **Judith Mackrell**

THE Royal Ballet is currently performing Romeo And Juliet, one of the most lyrically romantic ballets in its repertoire. On one night audiences can see Jonathan Cope offer his heart and soul to his one true beloved, Sylvie Guillem. A few nights later, with gestures of equally transparent ardour, he'll be doing the same with Darcey Bussell. Cope is at present playing Romeo to the Royal's two most famous Juliets. If Bussell and Guillem had their way, he'd be partnering them in every other big classic, too.

Meeting Cope after rehearsal, however, he certainly doesn't trail the pheromones of a faithless flirt. So what is it about him that has both Bussell and Guillem hankering to dance with him? The simplest if least interesting answer is his height, as Cope is one of the few male dancers around who's tall. Yet he possesses other qualities that together make him the ideal ballet prince. The first and most crucial is that Cope is an unusually deft partner and can juggle dancers through the most complicated manoeuvres so that they still come out looking like princesses.

As Bussell says, "Johnny's so experienced, you know you can take risks with him because he's always watching you. Less experienced partners lose their concentration and, by the end of a long ballet, when you're doing a big *pas de deux*, you're often having to remind them what to do, like 'We go right here . . . Hello, we go right here', when what you should be thinking about is your own dancing." But Cope also looks good on his own. He has a big plushy jump and a graceful line even in the most strenuous solo variations. Also, despite his mild English voice and manner, he looks extraordinarily like a young Greek god. His black hair curls tightly above fine dark eyes, while a very long straight nose makes a perfect geometry with his round olive face.

For all these reasons, Cope has been top of the Royal's casting list for much of his career. For a while Guillem had Cope to herself, as Bussell was paired first with Irek Mukhamedov and then with Zoltan Solymosi. But Mukhamedov wasn't tall enough to partner Bussell in every ballet, and Solymosi's ego turned out to be so unmanageable he was asked to leave. Guillem and Bussell, though, are not quite doing a Krystal-and-Alexis number backstage. Guillem is contracted to dance just 15 to 20 performances with the Royal (and not all with Cope), while Bussell has been firming up a guest partnership with New York City Ballet's Igor Zelensky.

Dancers are well used to swapping partners but Cope admits that it would be hard to go from one to the other on consecutive nights. He has close working relationships with both ballerinas and knows that "Darcey dances with her weight forwards and Sylvie with hers further back"; and that "Darcey likes to work everything through in the studio" while "Sylvie doesn't give out anything emotionally in rehearsal — she keeps it all for the stage".

Partners as naturally considerate as Cope are worth cherishing. Yet the qualities that women love in Cope aren't necessarily those he loves in himself. For instance, he regrets his height — "I've always wanted to be four inches shorter" — for one of the brute physical laws in ballet is that short dancers can jump and turn with a far more demonic virtuosity than tall ones.

He also finds his modesty a problem. When he started dancing lead roles, he was attacked for the subdued passion of his performances. The early bad reviews that said he didn't scorch hurt, but it was for personal rather than professional reasons that Cope stopped dancing for two years and set up a property-development business with his wife, ex-ballerina Maria Almeida.

HE DISCOVERED, however, that he really missed dancing, and after a year of struggling to get back into shape found a form that was more powerful and passionate than before. Cope has learnt to let himself go and dance from the heart. He's learnt to live for "those magical moments where it all comes together and your body seems to be doing it for you".

It's a shame, then, that Cope will soon have to think about retiring. At 33, having found the key to his art and feeling as strong as he ever has, he knows he has just three or four years left. Dancers are often undone by their best skills. Jumpers are prone to knee injuries, while great partners get stiff backs from lifting. (Nureyev complained that the ballerinas he shunted around took years off his career.) Cope is apprehensive about the Opera House's closure next summer, not just because of the extra touring it'll involve (he has two young children) but because he thinks that if the rebuilding takes longer than two years, "I won't get back in — I'll be over the hill". Yet despite his uncertain future, Cope appears angelically serene. "I just feel that right now, I'm here, I'm me and I'm really enjoying myself." And so, it seems, are Guillem and Bussell.



Hold tight . . . Cope plays a safe-pair-of-hands for Guillem, left. 'You can take risks as he's always watching you,' says Bussell, right

Cindy breaks for the border

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

LAST week Cindy, the Clytemnestra of EastEnders (BBC 1), snatched her children by assorted fathers and fled the country. She was one child short but, as she was clearly pregnant, that will soon be rectified.

And so the sun sank with a bump and we sank back in our seats, drained of all emotion.

"Why do they live there?" asked Queen Mary after a fleeting visit to the East End. Well, it ain't dull. Cindy, a bad girl with good cheekbones, had hired a hitman to shoot her husband, Ian. "You don't expect it round 'ere," said the square as he was stretchered away. Rubbish. It is precisely what you expect in Albert Square. All hell broke loose.

Grant and Phil, whose blunt, bald heads look increasingly like a pair of boxing gloves, went round 'aving a pop at anybody loosely peripheral to the plot. 'Aving a pop in EastEnders is accompanied by a cry, a crash and extensive extra work for make-up. In the general maelstrom of emotion Phil even gave his wife a black eye.

The other day I met a pair of doberman pinschers in the East End. "What are they called?" I asked, for I am favourably inclined towards anything with a leg at each corner. "Ron and Reg," said the owner briefly. "Ah," I replied more briefly still. The original template for Grant and Phil is all too obvious.

Big Pat's eagerly awaited wedding, the highlight of the social calendar, was cancelled what with all the guests being in intensive care or helping the police with their inquiries or having a pop at someone or applying beef to their blackening eyes. When police take away the best man, I think it just ruins it for everybody.

Cindy's skin-of-her-teeth escape was excellently scripted by Tony McHale and movingly played by Michelle Collins. If you saw this on a black-and-white set — the good-looking and vicious lovers, the deserving and despised husband — you would be reminded of a film noir from the forties. Something with Lana Turner in it. Wisps of the dialogue hang around the mind like cigarette smoke in clothes. "What is it you're after, Cindy?" "No more than anybody else." "Don't you understand? This is what I do. I just let people down. I've made a habit of it all my life."

I have watched thrillers with much less twang than this. As Cindy collected her children one by one in a car lent by her lover (which, characteristically, broke down) she was overtaken by her husband (armed, equally typically, with filofax and mobile phone). She snatched their sons successfully but he found their daughter first. No one noticed Cindy on the far side of the square, veiled by leaves, except this little girl, who gave an inarticulate, misinterpreted cry.

EastEnders rarely leave their habitat. They seem to move in droves like beasts — with the occasional carnivore — and gather each evening at the waterhole. But now the story burst out of the square altogether. London whizzed by the windows — garish petrol stations, grimly shuttered shops, the dome of St Paul's shining like a light bulb — as Cindy made her fox run for freedom, and Grant and Phil followed.

"I didn't think you liked Ian," said Grant. "Don't give a monkey's about him. Feel more sorry for Cindy for having to put up with him all these years," said Phil. "My advice", said Grant, "is never to tell Kathy." "What do you take me for?" asked Phil. "Stupid?" Phil often asks if you think he's stupid. My advice is never to tell him. Lenin was sent in a sealed railway carriage from Switzerland to Petrograd like a dangerous virus and released there to devastate Russia. Even as we speak Cindy is on her way by Eurostar to Paris or Brussels. Considering that more grown men go down with Cindy than influenza, do you think we should warn the French and Belgians of their approaching peril?

Oh, the hell with them.

Gender benders

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

TWELFTH NIGHT is a play you can twist any which way if you have a good Malvolio and a credibly boyish Viola. So Trevor Nunn's film of it ought to more than pass muster, as Nigel Hawthorne is Malvolio and Imogen Stubbs is Viola (much aided by Helena Bonham Carter's Olivia).

All should be well since they know exactly what they are doing. But doubts persist because, in spite of Clive Tickner's fine cinematography, Nunn's ability to make theatre into a convincing cinematic experience is limited. Kenneth Branagh's Much Ado did that, even if it bordered on the vulgar. The absence of a similar sense of movement and pace is very damaging, especially for those not over-familiar with the play.

Here we have a girl (Olivia) falling in love with a boy (Viola) who is, in fact, a girl — think of what Derek Jarman might have made of that. Nunn plays it straight, encouraging the audience to believe that Olivia is really gulled but not quite able to convince us that she should be. But the cinema has asked us to believe a lot less credible things recently, like a pregnant Schwarzenegger. It is just that Nunn never lets the play fly as a true film-maker might.

Stubbs's Viola could scarcely be better. Her difficulties are never overplayed — the girl-into-boy transformation is funny, not farcical, and the finale done with sentiment but without over-emphasis. Bonham Carter is almost as inventive, making Olivia stronger and less fluttery than usual.

You can't say that of all the humour, though Hawthorne as the absurd Malvolio attempts to get away from the sillier aspects and maintain some dignity. One of Shakespeare's cruellest roles is made less so, which is all to the good.

Richard E Grant and Mel Smith as Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch are broader characterisations, as if Nunn were determined to make audiences laugh. It works, but only just. In contrast, Ben Kingsley's Feste is a lugubrious clown, with too grave a voice. I wouldn't have minded seeing Kingsley as Malvolio and Hawthorne as Feste. But there you are.

The film also founders on a feeling that there isn't a clear interpretation of the play to inform it. All you can see is a good cast tutored by an intelligent theatre director.

We don't always want radical reworkings — half of which are merely an attempt by directors to show how clever they are — but while Nunn serves most of Shakespeare's myriad ideas, he misses the opportunity to emphasise them for the many members of the audience who will be seeing Twelfth Night for the first time.

When The Cat's Away, made in Paris by Cédric Klapisch, is genuinely charming. The original title was Everybody Looks For Their Cat, which gives a better sense of this affectionate comedy about a young Parisienne who wants to go on holiday, boards out her cat and spends the rest of the film trying to find both it and love.



Imogen Stubbs 'could scarcely be better' as Viola in Twelfth Night

If this plot seems a tad thin, what distinguishes its execution is the natural, unforced and unglamorous performance of Garance Clavel as the make-up artist with the cat, and Klapisch's subtle observation of the quarter (Popincourt, the 11th arrondissement) in which it is set. Here we meet the young, forced to move on by rent increases; the old, who remember something better; and the street life that still seems full of real life.

Perhaps the film is a little sentimental and perhaps the characters we, and she, meet are a little sweeter than in life. But this is still a cherishable delight that has something to say about community less clichéd than the mouthings of politicians.

This is the Paris we know and love, but it's changing fast and not for the better. Demolition, high-rises and the destruction of buildings and old communities are taking their toll. The people the girl meets — an Arab who fancies her, the gay young man who shares her flat and the young drummer who beds her before rushing off to his girlfriend — still seem very human. They are not yet totally ground down by circumstances beyond their control.

And there's a wonderful old lady, flitting in and out grumbling, who alone is worth the price of a ticket.

Big Mack . . . The House For An Art Lover in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE ARMSTRONG

Raise high the roof beams

The house Charles Rennie Mackintosh planned in 1901 has only just been completed, writes **Brian Edwards**

IT HAS taken nearly a century for society to summon the courage and resources to construct one of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's most brilliant conceptions, the House For An Art Lover. Designed in 1901, a 10-year project to build the house for the people of Glasgow has just reached its conclusion: it now stands between lime and beech trees in Bellahouston Park.

As befits a house not so much for living in as for experiencing the artistic way of life, it is no ordinary building. There is a lack of normal functional arrangement, a scale that is certainly not domestic, and an interpenetration of architectural space, light and volume that is almost baroque.

Mackintosh designed the house immediately after he had married his artistic partner Margaret Macdonald. In the Scottishness of the design and in the presence of a nursery there is a definite sense that this was not so much intended for Mackintosh's client, the German industrialist Alexander Koch, as for the newly-wed architect and his wife.

Koch had launched an international competition in 1900 to find the best architect to realise his dreams. He did not find that architect, but published as a lithographic portfolio three of the schemes, including Mackintosh's romantic, indulgent and poetic proposal.

What is remarkable, bearing in mind British artistic timidity and relative poverty, is that the House For An Art Lover has finally been constructed. At a cost of £4 million, it was clearly too expensive for Koch, but not, it seems, for the "City of architecture and design". A few visionaries in Glasgow — from the engineer Graham Roxburgh to the architect and Mackintosh scholar Professor Andrew Macmillan — have seen the project grow into the now completed building. It opened to the public at the weekend.

Getting thus far was not easy: the project aroused its share of criticism. The Victorian Society accused it of being a "dangerous, conjectural reconstruction". Other critics are concerned at the lack of authenticity in constructing a building more than 90 years after it was designed without complete working drawings. They see it as a moral issue, bedding their arguments in the mainstream of modernist thought, where morality and aesthetics are intertwined. Others have voiced objections over the speculative nature of some of the decorative details.

Mackintosh gave us plans and perspective views, but there were many contradictions between the two, and much remained undesigned. It was a dilemma Macmillan and his team of experts resolved by looking elsewhere to how Mackintosh had solved similar problems in other buildings. From Hill House you find the detail on the window seat; from Queen's Cross Church the hall gallery; and from the Art School the staircase.

Fortunately, there is no pastiche of Mackintosh, no parodying so familiar elsewhere in Glasgow. Details are either as the master had designed them for the house or elsewhere, or, where no evidence existed, they are frankly modern.

So you move from rooms true to Mackintosh to those of a more contemporary nature as though slipping in and out of a dream. The initial sequence of spaces — the double-height entrance hall, the dark and moody dining room, the light and airy music room and the white, womb-like oval room — are just as Mackintosh showed them in his perspective views. A play of black and white, of light and shade, of large volumes and small — all so typical of Mackintosh at Hill House and Windyhill — confronts the visitor. After the austere outside, with its white cliffs of render, the interior is a surprise. Full of light, colour and mood, it shows just what a supreme master Mackintosh was of interior architecture. Like many of his buildings, the exterior and interior don't seem to fit together, just as Mackintosh's own life was full of contrasts and disjunctures.

Inevitably in such a project there were disagreements among the chief protagonists over detail. Cultural archaeologists and architects come from different traditions and do not always see eye to eye, and the artist craftsmen had their own view on how materials should be put together. Such lengthy discussion took place over Mackintosh's exact intentions that one exasperated cabinet maker "wished he could dig the man up and ask him direct". But, as befits an art lover's house, the debate is as valuable as the product, and should not end now the house is practically completed.

Some rooms still require to be created as Mackintosh intended: the nursery with its shallow-barrel vaulted ceiling and kissing couple in gesso (a form of decorative plaster panel) over the fireplace will surely be realised in time, and the same is true of the breakfast room.

IF THE HOUSE For An Art Lover has led to healthy debate over authenticity and interpretation, it has also done much to revive the arts and crafts in Scotland. As a true artist Mackintosh worked with the sister arts of stained glass, metalwork, furniture design and gesso. To realise one of his projects today requires patronage, which also helps keep alive these dying crafts. Looking at the house and its furnishings one has to be impressed by the quality of artist craftsmen in Scotland today.

The House For An Art Lover is really Mackintosh's own dream house. No other 20th century architect lived so fully the life of an artist: he designed buildings, furniture, posters and tried finally to make a living painting. All the ethos, passion and irony of Mackintosh's own life is captured in this building. Its real worth today is to ensure that it continues to be an art lover's house, inspiring others to the same high ideals.

Nazi loot up for grabs

Ian Traynor in Vienna

FIFTY years after Austria secreted some of the Nazi spoils of war in a Danubian monastery and hoped the crime would be forgotten, the plundered art of middle-class Jewish Vienna is going to auction.

In the macabre sale this week Christie's is to dispose of more than 8,000 paintings and *objets d'art* stolen in 1938-45 from Austria's pre-war Jewish community of 180,000. Artworks range from an ancient Greek bust of Alexander the Great to cut crystal and silver candelabras.

The sale is expected to raise at least £3 million for Holocaust survivors and their families.

"It is the stolen art from stolen lives," said Peter Noever, head of Vienna's Museum of Applied Arts, where the curtain was finally lifted last week on the Mauerbach Collection, named after the 14th century monastery outside Vienna where the government kept the art hidden until last year.

Viewing the thousands of pieces is like intruding on a private, unspoken grief. "We're very unhappy about this sale. We'd much rather not have had this. But what are we supposed to do?" said Peter Liska, vice-president of Vienna's Jewish community.

The antiques and paintings once graced the drawing rooms of the Jewish middle class. Antique carved bedsteads and incomplete porcelain dinner services are on offer, the sad relics of a culture viciously rubbed out. More than a third of Austria's Jews died in concentration camps.

In a foreword to Christie's catalogue, Austria's President Thomas Klestil welcomes the auction "as the culmination of efforts by the Austrian government over many years to return objects of art and other items seized from Austrian Jews by the Nazis to their rightful owners".

In fact, the Austrian government has stalled for decades.

Carry on up the Congo

Alexander Frater

Congo Journey
by Redmond O'Hanlon
Hamish Hamilton 472pp £18

Bad Land: An American Romance
by Jonathan Raban
Macmillan 325pp £15.99

ON *1 MAY* 1983, Marcellin Agnagna, a Congolese biologist, saw a dinosaur swimming in a remote Congolese lake. Though too agitated to take pictures he noted its tiny head and massive back, even managed a few conjectural measurements. He wrote a report which, in due course, arrived at the Oxford home of Redmond O'Hanlon.

O'Hanlon subsequently turned up in the People's Republic of the Congo equipped for a six-month march, obtained permission to visit Lake Tele by assuring the Brazzaville comrades — who took him for a spy — that he was actually a Darwinian Marxist with a deep interest in sorcery. They liked that and, lubricated by a backhander of £1,000, sent him on his way.

He travelled with Agnagna, Agnagna's two brothers and Larry Shaffer, an old American friend. (Old friends are traditionally invited to accompany Redders on his nature rambles — James Fenton went to Borneo with him, casino-operator Simon Stockton to the Amazon. Both swore never, ever again, and I imagine the others — a new book being contemplated — flinching each time the phone rings.) This book has all the usual wonderful touches — swarms of bees passing overhead "with . . . a roar like escaping steam", how it feels when 22 million migrating driver ants want to get into bed with you, what it's like when a village chief plans your execution even as he drinks your whisky and accepts your gifts.

O'Hanlon brought Oxford pipes and Balkan Sobranie tobacco for the chiefs, Swiss Army knives and Birmingham-made machetes (with a lifetime's guarantee) for the rest. He also treated the sick. While occasionally voicing exasperation — "Almost every Bantu man I met . . . had a headache, a boil that needed dressing, and at least one wife with malaria" — he patiently handed out quinine and Fansidar for the wives, Paracetemol and Savlon for their husbands.

And he tried to keep up with the extraordinary sexual adventures of Marcellin and his priapic brothers. Here is one, the boss-eyed Nzé, entering a hut in which a naked pygmy girl sits. "[He] walked over, cocked his head to one side, put his hands on her firm young breasts, and squeezed." When Shaffer yelled at him (and Marcellin muttered wearily, "Don't do it. I've told you before") Nzé explained: "It's the only way, doctor! It's the only way to say to a pygmy: 'You have wonderful breasts!'" "Moving deeper inland a more sombre mood intruded. O'Hanlon's good intentions fell victim to the climate; they grew mould and so, in a sense, did he. But hygiene no longer seemed a priority, scary things were happening.

The acquisition of a fetish allegedly containing a child's severed finger lies at the book's dark heart. It never left his person. But the dinosaur, if it ever existed, chose not to reveal itself — though one night at Lake Tele the pygmies claimed that they heard its "thin, high-pitched cry, ooo-ooo-oooo".

It's a huge, meaty, discursive book, perhaps 50 pages too long, but displaying an amplitude of vision that takes it beyond travel writing. There is a touch of greatness about Congo Journey that hints at exceptional things to come.

On the dust jacket of Bad Land, Jonathan Raban's latest, we learn that Raban became "as captivated by his story as an African explorer". If so, Raban's version of O'Hanlon's dugout was a Jeep equipped with air-conditioning and, in the vernacular of his pygmies, a "say-ellulah" phone. Set in the emptiest and most obscure corner of the United States, it's about failure and despair, the souring of the American dream.

In 1907 the new Milwaukee Road railroad set off through the Dakotas and into Montana, arbitrarily creating "cities" as it went. Each designated square mile of wilderness required populating and, for that, they targeted the Old World. Brochures in seven languages painted a roseate picture of the plains of eastern Montana. It was utterly fraudulent and brilliantly successful. Their victims poured over to form the last great west-bound migration of homesteaders. Raban, an emigrant himself, knows the fierce hopes that buoyed up these pilgrims and, visiting the town of Ismay with an agreeable man named Mike Wollaston, learnt how they had turned, literally, to dust. Here Wollaston's grandfather took a 320-acre half-section, joined a community that briefly flourished before it became apparent that Montana was "just about the poorest damned land in the whole United States".

Today Montana, a transit stop in their lives, is a wasteland of decaying farmhouses and skeletal fences. (Though Ismay recently renamed itself for a legendary quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers. The 28 citizens of newly minted Joe, Montana, printed souvenir T-shirts, hoped a bemused America would descend, chuckling and oh-my-goshing, in convoys of Winnebagos. Nobody bothered.) Out here, they don't like the government or the East Coast Establishment. Raban met a bright kid who had rejected scholarship offers on the grounds that the colleges were "too liberal".

What thrives in this hopeless soil is the kind of fundamentalism that led to the Waco conflagration and the Oklahoma City bombing. Raban's journey, made through empty landscapes that once brimmed with optimism, reveals what happens when American innocence begins to curdle. The tale, borne along by his superlative writing, is a riveting one.

Back roads . . . Pygmies hitch a ride in the Congo. The locals acted as guides to explorer Redmond O'Hanlon PHOTOGRAPH: IAN BERRY

Congo Journey can be ordered at the discount price of £14 and Bad Land at the discount price of £11.99 from Books@ Guardian Weekly

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Eighteen Layers of Hell: Stories from the Chinese Gulag, by Kate Saunders (Cassell, £14.99)

"*TORTURE* is forbidden in Chinese prisons. The authorities look after prisoners in accordance with laws [sic] and treat them with humanitarianism." Maybe Ma Yuzhen, Chinese ambassador to the UK, who wrote this letter, is genuinely ignorant of the atrocities inflicted on many prisoners in China. But if he thinks that the stories in this book constitute a gross libel on Chinese prison regimes, he could always sue. The Chinese, with their gift for poetic metaphor, have some quaint phrases for some abominable practices: "Su Qin carries a sword on his back" involves the hands being cuffed behind one's back — with one of the hands pulled back over the shoulder. (Try it now; and imagine maintaining the posture overnight.) "The cassia blossom vase" is the slops bucket: prisoners are asked to suck the contents through a rice straw, and must answer the question "does the cassia blossom taste sweet?" in the affirmative, or else. This humanitarian punishment is known as "paying respects to the cell god". On the bright side, prisoners' families are no longer invoiced for the bullets used for their execution. This is a harrowing book, but it must be read.

Slip-Shod Sibyls, by Germaine Greer (Penguin £9.99)

POOR Germaine, one had got used to thinking; such a fine and original mind, but now, but now . . . And then this comes along. A re-evaluation of the reputations — and destinies — of the few celebrated and canonical women poets, with a pin-sharp eye on their work and the varying degrees and types of condescension they were treated to. There is good, hard, impressive scholarship here; which, tied to her typically punchy prose, means that she's produced a book of enduring worth. It could even be her best yet.

What About Us? by Maureen Freely (Bloomsbury, £6.99)

AN ATTACK on the kind of feminists who try to change the subject when motherhood comes up, or propose loopy multi-parented utopias (hi, Germaine!). It's also a superb memoir about what happens to you when you do have children, how even the best men let you down, and how all the bad advice does your head in. "You want to know how I manage to look after so many children? Easy — I just do it badly." Terrifically witty, smart and brave; essential. I want to have her children. I don't mean that.

Clive at large in India

Farrukh Dhondy

The Silver Castle
by Clive James
Jonathan Cape 263pp £15.99

MANY years ago, I knew a man called Clive James. He and I were at college together. He was Australian — a comedian in a student revue and a rather racy poet. Also at the university at that time was a professor who wrote about civilisations. He has recently gone on to pronounce the novel as dead.

The Silver Castle tells the story of Sanjay, a slum kid from Bombay who runs away at the age of seven to the movie citadel of "Bollywood". He becomes a stunt man and two-bit star but ends up, through fatal design, exactly where he started.

In the course of this odyssey, he is deflowered by a boy gang leader of the Bombay streets and sold to a succession of pederasts from England and America. From these characters he learns and earns. These aesthetes communicate with him in the elaborate cross-cultural argot of the internationally pretentious, as keenly observed by James.

One of the aesthetes, Scott, walks with Sanjay to an art gallery. Sanjay remarks that his protector and pederast Desmond is a kind man, to which Scott replies — "What he really is, though, is smart. The smartest. Smarter than a poem by James Merrill. When I first knew him he was a boy-wonder professor at Barnard, I was just in from the sticks and here was this guy barely older than I was who could talk about *anything*. Isaiah Berlin's philosophy, Richard Feynman's physics, John Rawls's political theory, Diane Arbus's photography, Diana Vreeland's lipstick. He talked about them all as if he knew them personally. And Jesus Christ, it turned out that he *did*."

Of course, the rent boy of the Bombay slum doesn't make much of this conversation. The narrator wittily remarks in the next paragraph that the only person Sanjay knew from the list was Jesus Christ. This provides the novel with a dilemma. How can the well-known wisdom of this particular author — his literary allusions, his catalogue of reference — emerge in a novel about a slum boy who doesn't understand English? The novelist solves the dilemma with three brilliant manoeuvres. Firstly, Sanjay is punished for street crime by being sent to a school to learn English and is helped along by a gift from Rochester of a Concise Oxford Dictionary.

The second stratagem is to make constant but inconsequential reference throughout the book to Sanjay's actual or projected misunderstandings of Australian, American or figurative English. Sometimes, this misunderstanding is funny. A Brit technician with a film crew on which Sanjay has found a job as a "runner", in an argument about an essential pack of equipment, says "leave it out!" — which Sanjay proceeds to do. At other times, it gets terribly self-conscious and tedious.

The third stratagem is that characters — such as the editor of a national daily — enter the novel only as guests at a party. They can then hold the conversations James recreates to give us an insight into his own vision of India, its poverty, pretensions and prospects.

These conversations are essays on their own, with Sanjay's uncomprehending presence as an excuse. Throughout the book, in fact, James addresses the reader with observations so elaborate, detailed and conceited as to belong to the body of a travelogue rather than to the more connective tissue of a novel.

Finally, in a sort of coda, Mr James emerges, like the Wizard of Oz, from this clumsy machine, and addresses us in the present tense, telling us what his characters are now doing and where they will end up, and making compelling general observations with which (no doubt) we are supposed to agree: "And those terrifying African countries, the ones where the starving children swell up like cherry bubbles until pricked at last by the pin of death: those countries could all feed themselves if they were well governed, if the tribes would stop killing each other, and if the West could find a way of helping that doesn't hinder."

It is this sort of observation — liberally spread throughout the book — that makes me feel that the professor who now says that the novel is dead and that other forms must fill the vacuum is right.

Under eastern eyes

Norman Stone

Europe: A History
by Norman Davies
Oxford 1,384pp £25

A History of Europe
by J M Roberts
Helicon 628pp £25

THE FIRST and most obvious virtue of Norman Davies's new book is that it reads like the old Arthur Mee Children's Encyclopaedia. It is Europe from the Greeks to Gorbachev, and is very long — so long that my proof copy fell apart. Through the jumbled pages of the latter half, I could simply magpie amid a cascade of interesting information, presented without condescension and with great charm, which will be usable at any level of inquiry. This book is an astonishing piece of work.

Norman Davies is the world's leading authority on Poland, and it was there that he established himself in the sixties, at a time when it was exceedingly unfashionable to take an interest in that part of the world. Then, in the eighties, central Europe came into its own, along with the old themes of nationalism, religion and liberalism.

Eastern Europe is in fact a very good place to start an inquiry into Europe as a whole, as Lewis Namier showed: for it is the West in a mirror. Western Europe did not have to face invasion after the Dark Ages; the eastern European peoples could not develop so autonomously. Once they were allowed to do so — roughly after the middle of the 19th century — they established themselves.

Davies puts Slavs on the same footing as Latins and Germans, and this is another of his book's virtues. He takes the view of Christian civilisation that it is, in the words of the medieval Pope, "one body with two lungs": here the inheritance of Byzantium, of eastern Christianity, stretching into Russia, is as important as the inheritance of Rome in the West. The result is a Europe that does stretch from Galway to the Urals.

There is a dreadful problem with general surveys of this kind. You cannot write at much length about what you are interested in; too much detail clogs the chronology. Davies has solved this ingeniously, by offering hundreds of what he calls "capsules" of information, indented within the text. These deploy genius. Why is Russia called "Rus", and what part was played in its foundation by the Scandinavians? Why do Indo-European languages have their unique grammar, subjunctives and all? How was polyphony adapted in the West? Spanish and Polish poetry, even examples of agricultural science, techniques of minting money, how to keep time or build cathedrals — on and on it goes, showing an enormous amount of unselfconscious labouring in some very difficult literature.

It is not fair on John Roberts that he has put his perfectly serviceable frigate to sea in the company of Davies's dreadnought. He covers the same Greeks-to-Gorby area, but does so in a book that is half of Davies's size, and cannot afford the space for information that Davies supplies.

At bottom, Roberts is a northern, Protestant, belief-in-progress man who has sat on too many committees. The problem with this is that the turbines of progress, or even interest, now come from further east and further south. The Dutch, for instance, are indeed a manifestation of divine providence: they invented everything, and the whole planet is vastly better off for their existence. Theirs is still a rather wonderful country, full of highly educated people behaving with common sense. But what happened to Holland after her great days? It is unfortunately the case with nearly all English-written histories of modern Europe that they run out of steam once Europe stops moving in an English direction, ie, with the failure of classical liberalism in the 1870s. After that date, increasingly, English writers tend to plod, rather bewilderedly, through a story that, with fascism and communism, or even with Christian Democracy, becomes madhouse stuff. Roberts tries hard to bring out what is unique to European civilisation, the criss-crossing between a rationalisable religiosity and a spirit of technology, and he is good on both sides of this. It is just unfortunate that he has not the space to illustrate things as Davies has done.

Davies commands admiration in one area that is the trickiest of all — Europe since 1950. This subject is nightmarishly difficult for a writer. In the western half, politics is unbelievably dreary. The historians therefore tend to write the same worthy but boring book: growth of welfare, the planning state, consensus society, etc.

In eastern Europe, they are more grown up. There, there are dramatic moments, and no journalist who has spent time in the region has failed to become electrified by the process through which communism disintegrated. But then they all go and write the same book because the evidence is of much the same sort.

Davies solves these difficulties by carrying out a comparison of the two Europes, and manages to stress what the western Europeans achieved by contrasting it with the communists' doings in the east. I have never encountered a better short description of communism in central and eastern Europe, and there are little half-sentences here and there, for instance in the account of Hungary in 1956, which show that Davies knows an enormous amount about what really happened.

Gardening amid the ruins . . . in front of the Reichstag, Berlin, 1947; taken from *Chim: The Photographs of David Seymour*, (Andre Deutsch, £30) by Inge Bondi

The feminist in the wardrobe

Natasha Walter

The Power of Beauty
by Nancy Friday
Hutchinson 589pp £17.99

WITHIN this vast book, a hodge-podge of theory, anecdote, prejudice and rhetoric, there is an interesting small book struggling to get out. Nancy Friday roams around her subject, firing arrows in the vague direction of an argument, but rarely hitting the target. She writes about maternal deprivation, marabou wraps, death and genitalia, Gloria Swanson — you name it, it's in the pot.

Occasionally, she strikes an interesting note. When she asks why feminists have been so intent in their dismissal of feminine beauty and heterosexual love, her writing becomes more urgent. For this is a key question for feminists now. The present generation of young women has completely thrown off the puritanical fears that dogged their feminist foremothers.

This happy, tolerant feminism, that is comfortable with feminine beauty and heterosexuality, has actually always been around. Many feminists have always held to it, and others are moving towards it.

Germaine Greer's The Female Eunuch celebrated the gorgeous reality of women's bodies and erotic life. The most interesting shift that Naomi Wolf has undergone is from the anti-beauty polemic of The Beauty Myth to the occasional, tentative celebration of women's physical display in Fire With Fire. Camille Paglia's appeal has centred from the beginning on her ability to revel in heterosexual erotic culture.

Friday is working on the same lines. She remembers how important beauty was for her in the sixties and seventies, and the way that physical display added to her sense of independence rather than detracting from it.

"There was nothing reckless in my new exhibitionism, the exhilaration of walking along on a summer evening in a sea-green Pucci dress, a wisp of a garment you could hold on the tip of a pinkie nail and under which I wore only stockings and a garter belt. If men hadn't looked, I would have been disappointed," she remembers delightedly. Feminism, she argues, gave women like her the chance to define their own sexuality rather than being condemned to the nice girl/nasty girl stereotypes of the past. And so it enhanced their ability to dress up, to love men, and to take sexual pleasure where and when they wanted.

This idea of a tolerant, celebratory feminism rings true. There was a time in the sixties when, as Friday reminds us, one of feminism's slogans was that "women's freedom will be men's freedom too". In returning to the colourful sexual revolution of the sixties, Friday reminds us how much women were asked to give up by a women's movement that gradually became hostile towards feminine beauty and heterosexuality.

Friday is right that the "anti-men, anti-sex Matriarchal Feminists have so misappropriated the word feminism that I, along with other women, have hesitated to use the word, though we have no other". This is a British problem as much as an American one, that goes right back to the beginnings of the women's movement, when Mary Wollstonecraft included attacks on the "feathered birds" that were her female contemporaries in A Vindication Of The Rights Of Women.

When young women now hear of the women's liberation conference which published a paper saying "Fashion equals control equals violence against women", or when they read contemporary feminists saying that women who buy chic clothes are "poisoning their freedom" with "a dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of ageing, and dread of lost control", they naturally find the idea of feminism a turn-off. Friday is quite good at pointing out the problem, but she is terrible at suggesting ways to move on. Her inability to push the argument forward arises partly because, like almost all American feminist books, Friday's tome is only really about the writer herself. Maybe the personal is the political. But the political can't just be about personalities, just about Friday and her adolescent traumas and her divine wedding. This book is incredibly claustrophobic, because of its fixation on Friday's own life, her own relationships with, say, her mother, or her absent father, or her loving grandfather, or her perfect new husband.

And although I agree with her that feminism lost its direction when it chose to mould women into an impossibly dowdy and puritanical ideal, I don't agree that the way forward lies just in throwing ourselves into a celebration of feminine beauty and sexuality. Do feminists have to direct women's personal lives at all? Whether they are telling them to wear, or not to wear, sexy dresses; to have, or not to have, orgasms with men; feminists still seem to be too bogged down in what goes on in women's wardrobes to worry about what goes on in their workplaces, too worried about their lipstick to care about their bank accounts, too intent on their brash new weddings to listen to old fears about poverty and violence. And in the end the only ones that get hurt by those omissions are women.

Return to Zanzibar

Maya Jaggi

Admiring Silence
by Abdulrazak Gurnah
Hamish Hamilton 217pp £16

FOLLOWING the strange enchantments of his Booker-shortlisted Paradise — set in an East Africa on the brink of the first world war — Abdulrazak Gurnah's new novel grapples with an African-English present.

In crisis, an unnamed schoolteacher in south London takes stock of his life. With only a precarious sense of belonging, he is assailed by intimations of mortality (a "buggered heart", in his GP's helpful diagnosis); a crumbling relationship with his partner Emma; and a change of leadership in Zanzibar that prompts an anxious visit "home" after 20 years.

He is Gurnah's most unreliable narrator to date. He embroiders romanticised childhood tales to woo his fellow-student Emma Willoughby, and baits her Blimpish father with ludicrously parodic "Empire stories". His biggest lie — not to have told his relatives in Zanzibar of his partner and their 17-year-old daughter Amelia, or his family in London of the omission — paves the way for abject farce, as he faces an arranged marriage to the beautiful 20-year-old Safiya.

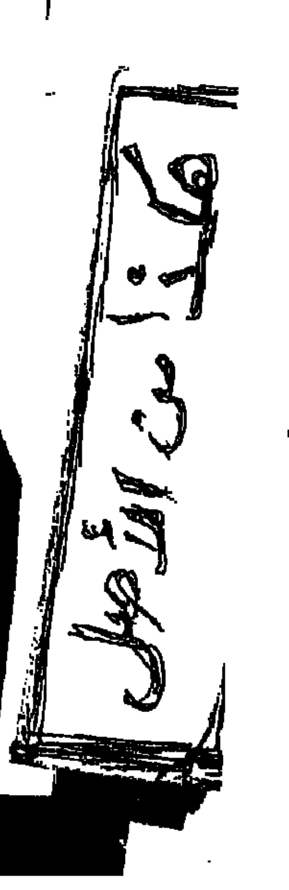
The novel's outrage at the "petty hardships" of African shortages and blocked toilets, and its satire on obscenely self-serving leaders, is uncompromising. Yet Gurnah is acutely aware of the hazards of raging against post-colonial Africa — the "overcharged ironies" in labelling those in charge "cannibal louts".

His hero's pandering fictions to the Willoughbys reflect the dilemma of the writer coming from what he terms with irony the "darker corners of the world": to play up to expectations of the "exotic" with anodyne nostalgia, or risk confirming bigotry through harsh realism.

The author's own choice is clear: "We keep silent and nod — for fear of our lives — while bloated tyrants fart and stamp on us for their petty gratification." It is tyrants who commend muteness in their subjects, like the Ayatollah with his *fatwa* — "another admirer of silence".

But the hero's stories also have a self-protective function. They shield him from guilt and recrimination and from the wounding power of words. His traumatic visit home banishes fearful silences within himself, and within his family, as he comes to an adult understanding of his parents after the obtuse resentments of childhood.

Despite its biting humour, Admiring Silence is in some ways a muted novel, an anguished meditation on home and loss that refuses the comfort of resolution. While it eloquently charts the cumulative changes wrought by geographical displacement, it also reveals the loss of love as a kind of exile.



Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Rovers slump

BLACKBURN ROVERS are English football's new crisis club. Premiership champions 18 just months ago, they are so far without a win with a quarter of the season gone and the team suffered further humiliation last week when they were knocked out of the Coca-Cola Cup by Second Division Stockport.

To compound the Lancashire club's misery, it was an own goal by captain Tim Sherwood in the 23rd minute that led to the team making an exit with heads bowed at the end of the third-round clash at Ewood Park

Two days later, the directionless club also found themselves managerless when Ray Harford resigned his job. He said: "It was a big decision but the performance and result against Stockport was the final straw. I have always tried to put the club first and I hope the decision can do some good." Former player-manager Howard Kendall is being tipped to take over.

Meanwhile Bolton Wanderers, whose victims in cup competition in recent years have included Arsenal, Aston Villa, Everton, Liverpool and West Ham, added Chelsea to the list last week, coming from behind to win 2-1 at Burnden Park.

Also out of the Coca-Cola Cup are struggling Leeds United, who went down 2-1 to Aston Villa, and Crystal Palace, beaten by Ipswich 4-1. Newcastle United, Middlesbrough, Manchester United, West Ham and Tottenham Hotspur all won their ties while Liverpool, Arsenal, Southampton, Wimbledon and Coventry have to replay their drawn games.

In Scotland, Rangers defeated Dunfermline 6-1 in the semi-final of the Scottish Cola-Cola Cup. In the final they will meet Hearts who saw off Dundee 3-1 in the other semi.

THE £670 million record-breaking deal between Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB satellite TV station and the Premiership has been thrown into doubt after Europe's competition authorities said the agreement was under scrutiny. Karel van Miert, the European competition commissioner, expressed concern about the dominant market position achieved by some broadcasters, including BSkyB. The commissioner has powers to revise contracts and fine broadcasters if he finds that competition laws have been broken.

GABRIELA SABATINI, the Argentine tennis star, is retiring from the game which has brought her a £6 million fortune in prize-money and an estimated £13 million in advertising deals over the past 12 years at the relatively early age of 26. Sabatini, the sixth-highest money-winner in women's tennis history, is departing with her talent largely unfulfilled after problems with motivation as well as a stomach-muscle injury which troubled her throughout this year, causing her to miss Wimbledon and the French Open.



Sabatni: quitting tennis

Sabatini turned professional at the age of 14 and was hailed as the player most likely to challenge Germany's Steffi Graf, but the highest world ranking she achieved was No 3 in 1989, 1991 and 1992.

MIKE GOLDING and the crew of Group 4 completed the first leg in the BT Global Challenge "wrong way" round the world race when they reached Rio de Janeiro at midday local time on October 23 after covering the 5,000 miles from Southampton in a record 23 days 3hr 47min 14sec. Toshiba Wave Warrior finished 2 hr 9min behind, with Concert still 60 miles astern.

LIVERPOOL hailed another boxing hero when Shea Neary claimed the vacant WBU light-welterweight title at the Everton Park Sports Centre. The 28-year-old easily outpointed America's seasoned Darryl Tyson after 12 hectic rounds. Three weeks ago Merseysider Robin Reid lifted the WBC super middleweight belt in Milan.

AXEL MERCKX, the 24-year-old son of Belgium's cycling legend Eddy, has signed a two-year contract with the Italian racing team, Polti. He will earn around £130,000 a year.

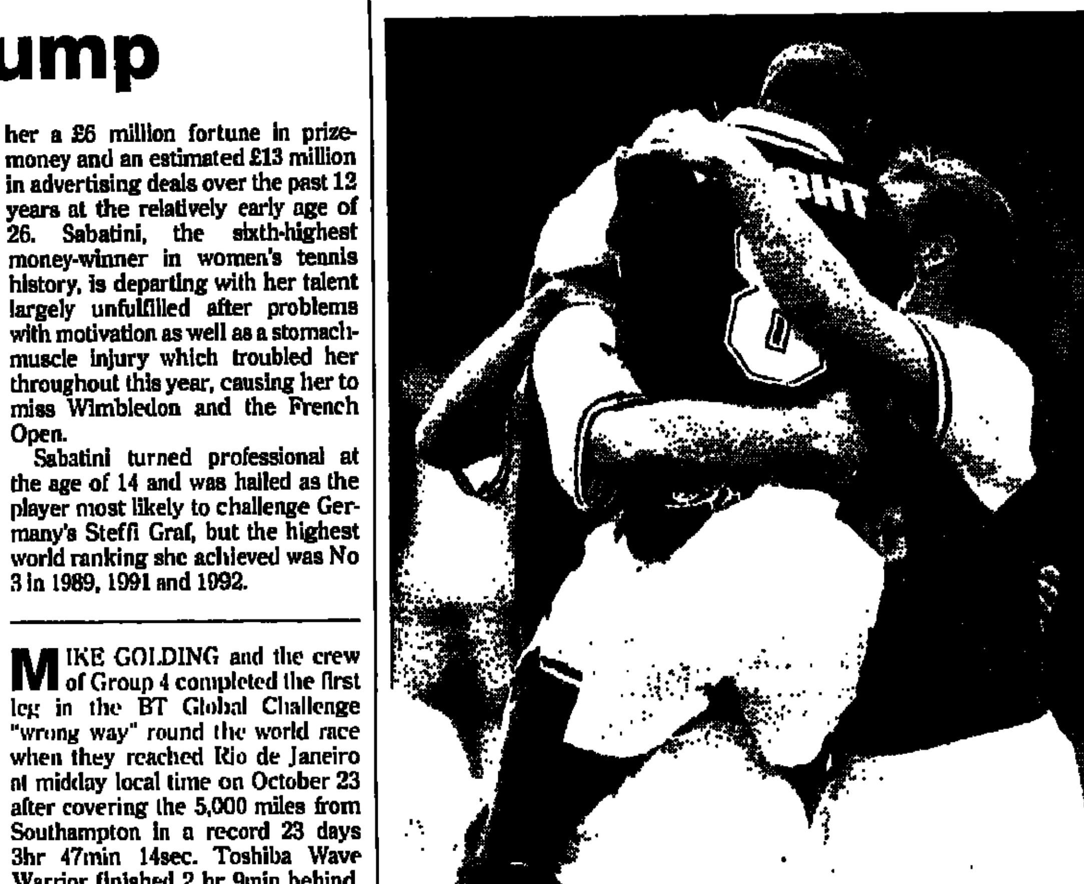
PAKISTAN beat Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in the second Test at Faisalabad to take the series 1-0. The home side dismissed Zimbabwe for 133 and replied with 267. The visitors made 200 in the second innings, leaving Pakistan with just 67 for victory, which they achieved without loss. Wasim Akram, who scored a double century and took 11 wickets in the first Test, finished the second with 10 wickets.

THE former Test cricket umpire Harold "Dickie" Bird, who retired from the game earlier this year, has been named Yorkshire Man of the Year by the county's awards committee.

COVENTRY City's manager Ron Atkinson was fined £750 and his assistant Gordon Strachan £2,000 — the heaviest imposed by the Football Association this season — for misdemeanours, which included Strachan's refusal to leave the pitch after being sent off in a reserve game against West Bromwich Albion on August 29.

JANET FEWINGS, a soccer referee, is in hot water after sharing showers with male players. The 41-year-old from Exeter, Devon, has been suspended.

Football Premiership: Arsenal 3 Leeds United 0



Wright mix . . . Ian celebrates his goal at Highbury with David Platt and Dennis Bergkamp PHOTOGRAPH: DAN SMITH

Back to the past with present imperfect

David Lacey

FOR a few seconds at Highbury on Saturday it was almost possible to believe that George Graham had returned to manage Arsenal. As soon as he emerged from the players' tunnel the home crowd, preferring to recall the honours his teams had won rather than the murky circumstances of his dismissal, gave him a standing ovation.

The illusion was only fleeting. Instead of turning right to sit in the Arsenal dug-out he had occupied for nine years Graham moved left to join the Leeds bench that has now been his lot for seven weeks.

Within 44 seconds Dixon had given Arsenal the lead. Another five minutes and Bergkamp had increased it. Graham, once the ultimate winner, had become just another loser near the bottom of the Premiership.

It would be hard to guess precisely which aspect of Leeds's fifth defeat in six league games since Graham took over caused him more discomfort — the supine state of his new team or the way his old one posed, preened and pirouetted once it became obvious that an emphatic win was theirs for the asking. In fact, the only surprising thing about Wright's third for Arsenal was that Highbury had to wait another 50 minutes for it.

Graham's Arsenal would hardly have dared take such liberties. Presumably, under Arsène Wenger, a spot of *froufrou* is in order every now and then, although Saturday's most pragmatic Arsenal performance was provided by a Frenchman Patrick Vieira.

Not that Highbury will be concerning itself with such niceties for the moment. Arsenal, overnight Premiership leaders the previous weekend, are now assured of top place for at least a week.

Football results and leading positions

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 3, Leeds 0; Chelsea 3, Tottenham 1; Coventry 0, Sheffield Wed 0, Leicester 2, Newcastle 0; Liverpool 2, Derby 1; Middlesbrough 0, Wimbledon 0; Southampton 6, Man Utd 3; Sunderland 1, Aston Villa 0; West Ham 2, Blackburn 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Arsenal (11-24); 2, Newcastle (11-24); 3, Liverpool (10-23).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First Division: Birmingham 2, Norwich 3; Crystal Palace 3, Grimsby 0; Huddersfield 0, Port Vale 1; Ipswich 0, Tranmere 2; Man City 0, Wolves 1; Oldham 0, Southend 0; Reading 2, Swindon 0; Sheffield Utd 1, Q P R 1; Stoke 3, Portsmouth 1; W B A 0, Bradford 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (14-31); 2, Norwich (14-30); 3, Crystal Palace (14-24).

Second Division: Blackpool 1, Watford 1; Bristol City 4, Notts Co 0; Burnley 2, Plymouth 1; Bury 2, Bristol R 1; Chesterfield 2, York 0; Gillingham 1, Preston 1; Luton 2, Bournemouth 0; Rotherham 2, Peterborough 0; Shrewsbury 0, Crewe 1; Walsall 1, Stockport 1; Wycombe 0, Wrexham 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Brentford (15-32); 2, Millwall (15-28); 3, Bury (15-28).

Third Division: Barnet 0, Carlisle 0; Brighton 0, Fulham 0; Cardiff 3, L Orient 0; Chester 1, Hereford 3; Exeter 2, Hartlepool 0; Lincoln 3, Colchester 2; Northampton 3, Darlington 1; Scarborough 2, Mansfield 1; Scunthorpe 2, Rochdale 2; Torquay 2, Swansea 0; Wigan 1, Hull 2 **Leading positions:** 1, Fulham (15-34); 2, Wigan (15-29); 3, Cambridge Utd (15-27).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 1, Raith 0; Dunfermline 2, Kilmarnock 1; Dundee U 1, Hearts 0; Hibernian 0, Celtic 4; Rangers 5, Motherwell 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (10-25); 2, Celtic (10-23); 3, Aberdeen (10-18).

First Division: East Fife 0, Airdrie 4; Morton 0, Dundee 0; Partick 3, Falkirk 0; Stirling A 2, Clydebank 0; St Johnstone 4, St Mirren 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Dundee (11-21); 2, St Johnstone (11-20); 3, Airdrie (11-20).

Second Division: Ayr 1, Brechin 0; Clyde 1, Hamilton 1; Dumbarton 1, Queen South 2; Livingston 2, Stranraer 0; Stenhousemuir 1, Berwick 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Ayr (11-26); 2, Livingston (11-24); 3, Hamilton (11-21).

Third Division: Albion 4, East Stirling 3; Arbroath 0, Alloa 2; Forfar 2, Inverness 0; Montrose 0, Cowdenbeath 2; Queen's Park 0, Ross Co 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Cowdenbeath (11-20); 2, Albion (11-19); 3, Alloa (11-18).

Golf Volvo Masters

McNulty courts his bonuses

David Davies at Valderrama

IN THIS the year of the six-stroke lead, the most enjoyable of the lot for the player concerned was surely that of Mark McNulty as he stood on the 18th tee here on Sunday.

He knew he could not lose the Volvo Masters, that he was bound to win not only the £150,000 first prize but also £39,000 from the bonus pool. Furthermore, he knew that an invitation to the US Masters had become rather more likely and his standing in the Sony world rankings would improve significantly.

McNulty had begun the day with a four-stroke advantage and it was not to be eroded at any time. Indeed with a birdie at the 72nd hole he increased his lead to seven, with four players grouped together on one-under — Lee Westwood, Wayne Westner, Sam Torrance and Jose Coceres.

The fact that Westwood had not won meant that Robert Allenby, some 12,000 miles away in Melbourne, had retained his third place in the Volvo rankings and has an outstanding chance of going to Augusta.

The Rookie of the Year title depends on a vote, with representatives of the R & A, the European Tour and the Association of Golf Writers coming to a decision. But Thomas Bjorn of Denmark won the most money, finishing 10th in the rankings some £7,000 ahead of Padraig Harrington, with Raymond Russell down at 14th. All three, having finished in the top 15, will earn places in the US Open. Additionally Bjorn is second in the Ryder Cup points list, and all the logical signs point towards him becoming the rookie for 1996.

Colin Montgomerie heads the Ryder Cup list, as he does the Volvo rankings. And, as he had become European No 1 for a record-equalling fourth successive time before this event began, he inadvertently robbed it of its traditional excitement — except, of course, for McNulty, who had a suspicion that he might win even before the event started.

"In the nine years that I've been coming to Valderrama I've always felt I could sneak a win, and I said to my caddie at the start of the week that this was my best chance," he said.

"When you come to this place you know that there are going to be 40 to 50 of the 60 or so players who are moaning and crying about the course. But I love its manicured state."

Valderrama has its flaws, but the course's condition is second to none, and the Ryder Cup participants next September need have no fears on that score. This is the last Volvo Masters to be held on the course, the Ryder Cup taking precedence next year. The tournament will be moved, probably to Portugal.



Highflyer . . . the lock John Wakeford enjoys lift-off as Cardiff's line-out dominate the Milanese PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MORGAN

Rugby Union Heineken European Cup: Cardiff 41 Milan 19

Jarvis leads victory charge

Robert Armstrong

CARDIFF laboured for this four-try victory over a doughty Milan side to secure a quarter-final place in near darkness at the Arms Park on Sunday. Tries by Mike Hall, Robert Howley, Justin Thomas and Mark Bennett papered over the cracks in a dogged Cardiff performance which kept the Italians at bay largely by the kicker Lee Jarvis's 21 points.

The Welsh club have completed their Pool D games but must wait until Saturday to learn if they have a home tie against Dax, Bath or Pontypridd on November 16-17. Despite a dull start to their domestic season Cardiff have proved a credible force in Europe — although they went for nearly an hour after a bright start on Sunday without crossing the Milan line.

Cardiff adapted quickly to the wet and windy conditions, a succession of tap penalties close to the Italian line applying unrelenting pressure that almost inevitably saw the predatory centre Hall storm through to cross after seven minutes. Jarvis converted.

Six minutes later Cardiff capitalised on a line-out a few metres from the left flag when Milan, concentration undermined by their early toil, left another defensive gap where the inside centre should have been. The giant lock Keith Stewart tapped Humphreys's throw to Howley who bustled around the tail for an opportunist score, and again Jarvis converted.

Soon the fly-half landed a 35-metre penalty which made it 17-0. Yet Cardiff then made things needlessly hard by losing focus up front, resting on their laurels instead of killing off Milan before half-time.

Midway through the half Milan began to advance behind the pin-point kicking of their Argentine-born fly-half Diego Dominguez, who slotted a penalty from 30 metres when Cardiff fell offside at a ruck. The Italians were then unlucky to be denied a try by the French referee when the wing Marcello Cuttitta squeezed over.

Soon it was Cardiff's turn, their replacement Ian Jones having a try disallowed and the home No 8 Hemi Taylor given a severe finger-wagging by Bernard Perez seemingly for skulduggery off the ball.

A further exchange of penalties maintained the 14-point gap before Milan deservedly crossed in the 40th minute when their hooker Alberto Marengoni was driven over between the posts. Dominguez converted but there was still time for Jarvis to land another 30-metre penalty for a 23-13 half-time lead.

Milan restarted with some tenacious counter-attacks, one of which ended with a Dominguez penalty. Then Howley hacked on from halfway, only to be pulled down a metre from the line before he could collect and score.

Minutes later Jarvis restored Cardiff's 10-point lead with a short penalty goal but on the hour both sets of forwards waded into the drenching conditions with acts of thuggery that produced a flurry of yellow cards. The Cardiff flanker Jamie Ringer was warned for a late tackle on Dominguez, then the Milan prop Franco Properzi saw yellow after stamping on the Cardiff loose-head Andrew Lewis.

Eleven minutes from time the full-back Thomas raced away for Cardiff's overdue third try after a slick pass by Leigh Davies, and near the end the flanker Bennett slid over in the right corner.

In Pool D's other game Wasps trounced Toulouse 77-17 at Loftus Road. The result against the European champions is truly remarkable, coming exactly a year after Rob Andrew left Wasps for Newcastle, taking some of the senior players with him. The victory margin proves the young side has come of age.

In Pool A Bath beat Dax 25-16 and Benetton Treviso defeated Edinburgh 43-23. In Pool B, Leicester triumphed over Pau 19-14 while Scottish Borders lost to Leinster 25-34. Neath defeated Ulster 15-13 and Brive beat Harlequins 23-10 in Pool C.

● Ian Tucker, a 23-year-old Oxford university rugby player, died in hospital after suffering head injuries in a game on Saturday. He was stretchered off when an attempted try-saving tackle during the university's 33-3 defeat by Saracens went wrong. He had been tipped to win a place in the Varsity match against Cambridge on December 10.

The South African-born Tucker had graduated in economics at Sydney before arriving at Oxford for a special diploma in social studies.

Rugby League New Zealand 18 Great Britain 15

Lions are tamed again

**Andy Wilson
in Palmerston North**

GREAT BRITAIN lost the Test series with this second defeat here last week but, if the margin was narrower than in the 17-12 first reverse in Auckland, this time the Lions could have no complaints.

It was New Zealand's first series victory over GB since 1984. They scored three tries to two and always looked the more potent attacking force. The Lions, led superbly by Andy Farrell, lacked nothing in commitment but created only two real chances and both were taken.

But New Zealand looked dangerous every time they had the ball, particularly through their half-backs Stacey Jones and Gene Ngamu, the centres Ruben Wiki and John Timu and the towering second-row Stephen Kearney.

It was Kearney who unlocked the Lions' defence with a pass for Wiki's second try early in the second half that brought New Zealand within a point of Great Britain, and another off-load by the Auckland Warrior sent Jones racing upfield to set up the decisive score with 16 minutes remaining.

Jones was prevented from grounding the ball by the Lions full-back Stuart Spruce, but from the resulting scrum Ngamu ran across the defence, dummied and created a run to the line.

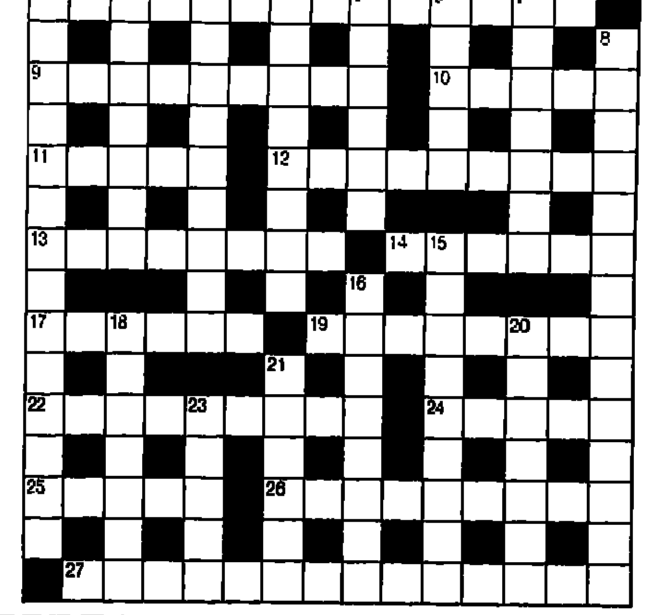
Matthew Ridge, who missed the conversion to Wiki's second try, allowing the Lions to stay 13-12 ahead, made amends from near the touchline and, although the Lions threw caution to the wind and Goulding landed a penalty, New Zealand remained the more likely scorers.

The Lions coach Phil Larder refused to use the farcical events of the past week as an excuse, with 11 players ordered home by the RFL chief executive Maurice Lindsay as a cost-cutting measure, insisting that it had not affected the performance of his team.

Both their tries came from inside the New Zealand half. After 26 minutes Farrell and Denis Betts created the space for Alan Hunte to score the game's first try, as he had in Auckland. The similarities continued as Betts crashed over for the second after some excellent handling.

This time New Zealand did manage a quick reply after Hunte had lost the ball near his own line in a tackle by Tyran Smith, Timu stepping inside Powell to set up the first for Wiki. But, with Goulding converting both tries and dropping a goal, the Lions led 13-8 at the break.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



Across

1 Not married for money by the turn of the century? (6, 8)
9 Stay in the air for Barrie's utopia (5, 4)
10, 11 Poet whose utterances are of value (10)
12 False or true — can he tell? (9)
13 True — cannot otherwise take in saint (8)
14 It makes me sick when they quote me the wrong way (6)
17 Stick for a curtain? (6)
19 Place for spectators no longer available: don't get involved (5, 3)
22 Expose fraudulent scheme coming out in print? (3-6)
24 Part of such reactionary paintings in Sanskrit book (5)
25 See 6
26 Nursemaid accepting a tribute from leading cleric (9)
27 Struggle for generation of witty Harry's ear, possibly (6, 5, 3)

Down

1 Cinque port theatre showing "The Go-between"? (8-6)
2 Stew up front with rainstorm to follow (7)
3 Protector for Jewish quarter, rather slow moving (9)
4 Cross about resistance: it's rough work (8)
5 Contract in connection with Italian leader (6)
6, 25 Unfinished work by journalist, a blow to the area (5, 5)
7 Despicable character with tear flowing (7)
8 Productive enterprise: East German lady goes about finding large plume (7, 7)
15 Awfully frumious little name for a root of… (5, 4)
16 In the theatre it's always the cheapest section (8)
18 Tycoon's right to swindle: there's a lot of it about (7)
20 Striking cry of alarm raised at plug-hole? (7)
21 Monastic rule prescribes degree in easy subject: on your head be it (6)
23 Less than foreign articles (5)

Last week's solution

	S		A		U				S		M		M	
P	U	N	G	E	N	T		O	P	P	O	S	E	D
	N		G		I		N		I		P		T	
A	B	O	R	T	S		U	N	T	A	P	P	E	D
	U		I		O		L		E		E		O	
T	R	U	E		N	O	L	E	F	T	T	U	R	N
	N		V				A		U				S	
		M	E	A	N	I	N	G	L	O	O	K		
	R				E		D				V		H	
W	E	R	E	W	O	L	V	E	S		E	T	O	N
	D		R		P		O		T		R		L	
S	H	A	N	G	H	A	I		R	A	D	I	S	H
	E		E		Y		D		I		R		T	
V	A	R	S	I	T	Y		E	N	G	A	G	E	D
	D		T		E				G		W		R	

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